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No. 280.

IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

BY G. RENE WOOD.

I saw a little child at play—
A bright-eyed boy of four.
His toys and playthings widely strewn
About him on the floor;
A joyous, happy child was he,
As I had ever seen.
No child like this had I to love—
Alas! it might have been.
I saw indeed a cheerful scene,
As through the window yon,
My eyes were called by voices gay
To turn and look upon—
A mother tossing up her babe
As proud as any queen,
The father sharing in her pride—
For me this might have been.
“Dear father, you have cared for me,”
I heard a maiden say,
And for those many years of care
I’ll pay with love each day.
Her arm around his neck she clasped
In love spontaneous—free—
My lonely heart beats wild to think
These joys are not for me.
I saw the proudest in the land
Before my classmate bow,
And maidens wreathed their choicest flow’rs
To grace the victor’s brow;
I saw him gain the highest place
The people could decree—
But for intemperance’s blighting cup
It might have been for me.
“Mong all the happy, joyful hearts
That beat in freedom’s land,
Not one that throbs with love for me,
Or seeks the outcast’s hand;
I shudder as the thought occurs—
What is to be my fate?
And realize the painful truth—
It might have been—too late!

Yellowstone Jack:

OR,
THE TRAPPERS OF THE ENCHANTED GROUND.

BY JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.,
AUTHOR OF “OLD BULL’S-EYE, THE LIGHTNING
SHOT OF THE PLAINS.”

CHAPTER VI.

LEGEND OF THE MEDICINE SPRING.

The five trappers stared in open-mouthed amazement. For the moment they appeared incapable of either motion or speech. The fall of their comrade, the abrupt disappearance of the weird woman and her beautiful companion, held them spellbound. Yellowstone Jack was the one who first cast off the peculiar sensation of awe.

“Gone in swimmin’, I reckon, boys; let’s see the fun,” he muttered, with a sickly smile, as he firmly advanced toward the mysterious boiling spring.

This action fully proved his courage more plainly than if he had charged a war-party of Blackfeet Indians single-handed. Yellowstone Jack was superstitious, like all of his class. He placed implicit faith in “medicine,” good and bad. He believed in spirits, in spooks and hobgoblins, just as he did in powder, lead and steel. Yet he strode forward and quickly scaled the curious-looking parapet or “curb” that surrounded the spring.

The basin was nearly circular, probably twenty-five feet in diameter at the widest part. The water was almost perfectly transparent. Yellowstone Jack could look down into the beautiful ultramarine depth to the very bottom of the basin. The sides were ornamented with coral-like forms of a great variety of shades, from pure white to a bright chrome yellow, while the blue sky reflected in the transparent water gave an azure tint to the whole far surpassing art. Near the center of the basin, the water was in a state of ebullition, forming a miniature fountain, some three feet in height. Around this the water sparkled and effervesced something similar to, though in a lesser degree, the far-famed Soda Springs of Bitter Root River. A thin vapor hovered over this spot, and the water really had the appearance of boiling.

“What’s the sign, Yellowstone?” called out Brindle Joe.

“You kin come up. They’ve puckered—but how?” That gets me!” gravely added the young trapper.

“Spooks is spooks—an’ so’s medicine,” quoth Hoosier, uncovering his head with an action that was almost reverence. “This is a big medicine spring—what good it be ‘thout its sperts? This ‘n’s got two, I reckon.”

“They handled that bow-arrers powerful like human critters though—I didn’t know sperts needed to use such things. An’ yit—what! they ‘n’ gone! We kin see the sides an’ the bottom, every inch. That ain’t no hole ‘cept that ‘n’ at the bottom whar the water bubbles up, an’ it ain’t big as a man’s fist. A mortal critter kedd’n go through that. They jumped in—they didn’t git out agin, or we’d ‘a’ seed ‘em. I reckon you’re right, Hoosier—we’ve seed the sperts o’ the Medicine Spring,” gravely muttered Yellowstone Jack.

“Did any one o’ ye notice that right paw?” suddenly put in Heely Hank. “This is the place whar old Black Harris kem to make medicine that time!”

The trappers interchanged quick glances. The lines upon their weather-beaten faces deepened. The expression of awe now appeared one of fear. Yellowstone Jack uttered, in a tone of forced rallery:

“You’re wuss’n a bedbug, Heely Hank—you’d wake a dyin’ man up to ax ef he blieved in the devil! But that’s Mexy—we’ve clean forgot the pore feller.”

What meaning was hidden beneath the words of Gila Hank? A wild, fantastic legend. To



The little party, with their strangely-found guide, glided along the perpendicular face of the canon.

explain the effect of his words upon his comrades, I will give a brief sketch of it here.

Black Harris—so called from his dusky complexion—was a noted trapper and mountain man, the comrade and friend of such noted men as Kit Carson, Jim Beckwith, La Bonte, Sublette, Greenwood, Bridger, Old Marble, head, Bill Williams and scores of equally well-known heroes of the West. Like the majority of his class he was superstitious, believed in “medicine,” and one time, after an unusually long run of ill-fortune, he journeyed to the Enchanted Grounds to renew his “medicine.”

Nearing the Boiling Spring, a young white woman suddenly barred his path. She was dazzlingly beautiful—an “angel ‘thout wings,” as Harris was wont to declare. She told a pitiful tale of peril and privation. Her friends had been massacred by Indians. She was carried into captivity. A week before, she managed to escape, and had wandered through the mountains ever since, starving. Black Harris forgot his mission, and kindled a fire by which he roasted a ptarmigan. He sat at her feet and watched her eat. Then she began to sing—a low, weird melody, strangely sweet, soothing to the senses as the gentle murmur of the summer breeze eddying through the foliage of the mountain pines. The trapper’s head slowly bowed. His soul seemed floating upon a sea of ecstatic bliss. The soft white hand fluttered over his head. The warm, slender fingers caressingly smoothed his long, tangled hair. His head sunk upon her lap. The song grew fainter, as though coming from a distance. A yell seemed settling over the trapper’s brain. The hand glided down over his cheek, but it no longer felt so soft—it seemed to scratch—to sear his skin as it touched his throat. He felt something touch the knife at his belt. His eyes opened. An arrow lay before his face. It was no longer white and delicate—it seemed to be black, covered with stiff bristles. He saw a boy lag—a cloven hoof. The truth flashed upon his mind, as he felt the knife slowly slip from his sheath.

He grasped the handle and tore it free. A horrible yell smote upon his ear, as he leaped erect. A frightful object confronted him.

“I knowed what it was in a minnit,” Black Harris was wont to say, “fer I’d seed the picture o’ the devil in a paper at Taos. I jest giv’ a Kimanche yell an’ lit onto the critter. We hed it red-hot, then. I reckon we foun’ fer nigh a’ hour. I’ve fit Kimanche, Patchie, ‘Rapho an’ Blackfeet, but they wasn’t a primin’ to him! I reckon he’d ‘a’ bin too many fer the old man, only his foot caught in a hole, an’ I downed him. I sent my butcher up to Green River twicet, an’ then he sickened. He giv’ a yell an’ then scooted over the mountain.”

“You see this claw? I cut that off when I jerked my knife loose,” the old sinner would add, holding up a crooked claw, that hung suspended around his neck by a piece of sinew.

One man—a stranger to Black Harris—swore that the claw had come from the foot of a carcajon. The irate trapper denied this, by driving his knife hilt-deep in the man’s breast. After that no one doubted the strange story, and it passed into tradition. Even at this day the legend may be heard around the campfires. I was told it by a trapper who devoutly believed in its truth; yet he was a keen-witted, shrewd and sensible man, in everything except his strong superstition.

Yellowstone Jack and his comrades had often heard this legend, and they knew that this was the very spring mentioned by Black Harris. The strange scenes they had witnessed—this beautiful woman and her marvelous dis-

appearance had fully aroused their superstition.

They found Chavez, the Mexican, dead. The arrow had pierced his neck, dividing the spinal column. They lifted his body and bore it hastily away from that ill-favored spot. Not even a dead man could rest there.

A shrill, piercing, taunting laugh came to their ears, as they passed down the valley. Turning, they beheld a weird figure standing upon the mound they had crept up behind. It was that of the old hag—the witch of the Boiling Spring. Again the laugh, unearthly, dissonant.

“This is the devil’s den, boys—I can’t breathe easy in it,” huskily muttered Yellowstone Jack, hastening forward with his ghastly burden.

This belief seemed shared by his comrades, since their pace was accelerated, nor did one of them cast another look backward or pause for breath until they had passed an abrupt bend in the valley that effectually shut off all view of the Springs.

Yellowstone Jack paused beside a large boulder that stood upon one end; at its base was a small hollow. The men read aright his questioning look, and nodded assent. With their knives the hollow was deepened, the loose earth carefully placed in a pile. Then the body was deposited in the trench and a few leaves and twigs strewn over it. The dirt was pushed back and pressed down. Then the four men bore heavily against the boulder until it slowly toppled over, forever concealing the grave from human eyes.

“He deserved a big monument of human critter ever did,” said Jack, brushing the perspiration from his brow. “He was a squar’ man, clean through, ef he did hev greaser blood in him.”

“Big es the rock is, ‘twon’t keep him down, I’m dub’us,” gloomily muttered Brindle Joe. “A murdered man can’t rest peace’ly long’s the one whar rubbed him out goes unpunished. But what kin we do? Kin we take the skelp o’ a spook? Not much!”

“I don’t know—mebbe we was too quick in gittin’ skeered—thar’s a pesky lot o’ humbug in this world. Mind, I don’t say ‘t this ‘n’ humbug—but I do say ‘t I’m goin’ to look inter it a little closter afore long. Chavez was too good a pard to be let go so easy. But never mind that now. It’s time we was gittin’ back to quarters. Thar’s a storm brewin’—I kin feel it in my bones!”

“Round by the point ‘ll be the quickest way, I reckon; a little longer, but easier walkin’.” Half an hour later a glorious prospect was opened before the eyes of the trappers. They stood upon a narrow ledge of rock that ran partially around the mountain. Before them, to the right and left, miles and miles of ground seemed spread at their feet; of hills and ridges, broken and wild, of valleys and miniature plains, fertile and lovely, of deep, winding canyons, gloomy and forbidding—all these features were spread before them.

“Ge—thunder! look in Bad Wolf kenyon—see the white wagon-kivers—a emigrant train!” exclaimed Brindle Joe, in no little astonishment.

“Skelps must be plenty w’ them sence they kerry ‘em to sech a market as this. But look—in a hurry, too. Ef we’re ketchin’ hyar, it’s good-by John!”

The trappers fully realized their danger, and began rapidly descending, leaping from ledge to ledge, alighting upon rocky crags that would scarce have afforded footing for a mountain

goat, letting themselves down by bushes and creepers. They knew that this was no common storm, that a human being upon the mountain, unprovided with shelter, would stand but a faint chance of escaping with life.

“Hyar we be—an’ none too soon, nuther!” gasped Jack, as he crept into a roomy cave half-way down the mountain side. “Jess listen! it’s a game o’ ten-pins w’ dornicks fer balls ‘n’ trees fer pins!”

Huge boulders thundered by. Great trunks of trees, splintered and cracked, were hurled past the cave-mouth. The icy-cold blast eddied through the den, chilling the men to the bone, until they were glad to huddle close together as a mutual protection.

Yet, whenever the roaring of the elements would admit of audible speech, they discussed the sight they had just witnessed—that of the white-tilted wagon-train. Its presence in that remote region, so far from any recognized emigrant trail, was indeed remarkable. They could not understand it, knowing as they did how implacable the Blackfeet were toward all pale-faces not actually adopted into their tribe. It seemed a miracle how the travelers had escaped massacre thus long.

“Mebbe it’s one o’ them ‘splorin’ outfits, though whar they want hyar, I don’t know. They say thar is sech things, but I can’t see what for—unless to keep the Injins stirred up, or to make game an’ beaver skeerce.”

“Mought be a government-train to ‘stablish a tradin’ post,” feebly suggested Brindle Joe. “I didn’t see no sojers—but it may be. Anyhow, they’re white. S’posin’ we giv’ ‘em a call? Mebbe we kin make a raise o’ some powder an’ whisky.”

This last suggestion of Jack’s clenched the matter. The decision was unanimous—they would visit the train as soon as the storm would permit.

The trappers did not wait long before starting forth, though the powder was still raging furiously. But it was freezing cold within the damp den, and they preferred risking the danger of being crushed to death by some of the many storm missiles, or being blown over the edge of some canon, to freezing. At least the exercise would prevent that.

The nature of the ground, broken, intersected by almost fathomless canyons, forced them to make a wide detour in order to reach the train. There was more than one narrow escape from death, but they reached the upper pass at last, sound in limb, when the storm was nearly over.

“Look yender!” suddenly cried Brindle Joe, pointing toward a point of rocks. “White men, by mighty!”

“An’ red-skins, too! Thar’s goin’ to be a fast-class muss thar in jist three shakes! Look! thar it comes! Boys—they’re whites—shell we let ‘em be wiped out like that?”

Yellowstone Jack’s comrades replied by gliding toward the spot where the rival races had come into collision. And the wild sounds of mortal strife arose even above the unceasing clamor of the warring elements.

CHAPTER VII.

FRANK MAYNARD was not a little surprised by this abrupt speech of the Indian, and for a moment made no reply.

“Blackfeet—pale-faces fightin’ over dere. One git killed, oder come here. Plenty mad, den—eyes full blood. No stop to talk—strike fast—strike hard, too. Better we go hide, den. Dat why Pethonista he say—you help me—I

help you,” rapidly added the savage, though with evident difficulty, for the long bowlder passed directly across his waist.

“Were I to set you free, we would only have one more enemy to deal with,” hesitated Maynard, eying the prostrate warrior with evident suspicion.

“Help him if you can, Frank,” interposed Minnie, eagerly. “Think how he must suffer beneath that rock!”

“He don’t look like such a very bad Indian,” murmured Ada Dixon, then shrinking back as the keen black eyes of the savage were turned upon her; there was a glow of admiration in their depths that chilled her blood.

“Pethonista he chief—he no got crooked tongue. What he say, he do. He don’t want you’ scalps. He got plenty strong voice. All he need do is holler loud. Blackfoot hear—dey come—ax what chief want. He say—tek scalp pale-faces—you git kill quick. Pethonista don’t yell—don’t say tek scalp—den he you’ frien’. Dat my talk.”

“Well, red-skin, you may be honest—and I more than half believe you are—but mind this. If I set you free from this hobble, and you try to play us false, I will kill you like a coyote—mind that!”

“No need talk so—a chief don’t lie,” coldly responded the Blackfoot, his brow corrugating.

The sounds of firing still continued, though at longer intervals, and the faint yells could occasionally be heard. Evidently the struggle still continued. The two men, even while speaking, listened eagerly, each one hoping and longing to distinguish some sound that would proclaim the victory of his people.

“That remains to be seen, chief, though I must say that your tribe has not a remarkably savory reputation; but the devil is not as black as he’s painted, and this may be a good deal owing to prejudice. However, I will set you free, if I can. The rock is a big one, and I am only one man, after all.”

“Ada and I will help you, Frank,” said Minnie, eagerly.

“Won’t need much lift. Me fall in hole here, else rock kill me plenty quick. I hug down tight, dough,” interposed Pethonista, bracing his hands against the rock.

Maynard secured a firm hold upon the smaller end of the oblong bowlder, and then, exerting his utmost power, succeeded in raising the stone a few inches. Ada and Minnie lent their mite, and Pethonista, with an agile, snake-like movement, writhed his body out from the little hollow into which he had fortunately fallen. A single foot to either side and the massive bowlder would have crushed him to death. As it was, he had escaped serious injury, though considerably bruised.

He did not speak, but bowed before the women, lightly pressing their hands to his bosom, as though vowing fealty to them. Then drawing the knife from his girdle, he held the handle toward Maynard.

“Let my white brother take this knife, and if he sees a single black spot in the Eagle’s heart, let him strike hard and wipe it out.”

Though he spoke in his own dialect, there could be no mistaking this action, and whatever of suspicion Maynard may have entertained was now banished.

“No, chief, keep your weapon. I don’t believe you would turn it against the breasts of those who have befriended you. But see—the firing has stopped. The fight must be over. If I only knew how it had ended—!” added Frank, anxiously.

“No—um go on agin. Dere rifle—some one git killed den, I reckon,” coolly returned Pethonista, or the Eagle, as that title may be interpreted.

“Only for—” and Maynard looked wistfully upon Minnie and Ada, who had sought shelter from the cutting wind behind a point of rock.

“I would go and see if I could not help the whites. They must be friends—perhaps some of our people, searching for us.”

“You lose scalp dere, sartin. Big warriors, Blackfeet—fight like debble—love white blood. Bes’ we hide now, till kin git back to you’ fren’s. When dark comes, den me show you trail. Be fool if take pale squaws where mebbe dey lose scalp. Be snake now—dat bes’, Dat my talk.”

“You think that we will be cut off by the Indians if we try to reach the wagons now? That we had better hide until after dark?”

“Me tink dat bes’ trail—save scalp, den, sure. Mebbe kin save it anyhow, but not sure. Pethonista chief, but he act now like common brave. Koutonipi lead Blackfeet now. But come—fight come dis way, quick—we bes’ go hide, while kin,” hurriedly added the Indian, after a moment’s pause.

Maynard did not hesitate long. He also could tell that the combatants were gradually nearing the spot, one party evidently being forced back. And he dreaded lest the maidens should come to harm in the melee that must follow in case he should hold his ground. He believed that Pethonista could be trusted, and acting upon the impulse, yielded to the Blackfoot’s guidance.

The Eagle appeared to have fully decided upon his course of action, for he did not hesitate a moment after the young man mutely admitted his trust, but glided rapidly away from the spot that had so nearly witnessed his death. Maynard followed close upon his heels, assisting Minnie and Ada over the inequalities, striving to lessen, if not dissipate, their natural fears.

After proceeding some two-score yards, their further progress was barred, the ledge abruptly ending. Pethonista chuckled grimly at the blank look that Maynard cast upon

him, and stooping, he lightly dropped over the edge of the canon, alighting upon a ledge scarce one foot wide.

"You must be mad, chief," cried Maynard, angrily, in answer to the Blackfoot, who motioned him to pass the women down to him. "You would both fall and be dashed to pieces. No, you must find some better trail than that, or else we will stay here to face whatever may come. We will not tempt Providence."

Pethonista made an impatient gesture, then dropped from his perch to another some six feet below. Drawing himself up again by the strength of his arms, he uttered:

"Dat way, I mean. You give squaw—I put her down dere. Den you come—we go, too. All right den—plenty room—wide trail. Better dan wait fo' Blackfeet come scalp—eh?"

"He is right, Frank," interposed Ada. "If we trust him at all, why not entirely? I do not believe he means treachery. He seems grateful for what you did—I am sure of it. I will go first—help me."

The Eagle gave an emphatic grunt of approval and raised his arms. Maynard yielded, and lowered Ada over the escarpment. Pethonista held her lightly for a moment, then carefully dropped her to the second ledge.

"I was right—there is a good, safe path here," the brave girl cried, the next moment.

Thus reassured, Minnie was quickly placed beside her cousin, and Maynard followed. Pethonista dropped to the ledge with the ease and lightness of a cat, and then led the way along the ledge.

The scene was a peculiar one. The little party, with their strangely-forged guide, were gliding along the perpendicular face of the canon, several yards below its top. The abyss yawned below them, dark and gloomy. The bushy tops of trees swayed to and fro below them in the eddying wind, though scarce a breath touched the fugitives. The wall above shielded them.

The ledge they trod was dry and free from snow or sleet. Indeed, though the air had been full of snow for such a length of time, comparatively little had fallen. Even as a flake touched the ground, a fresh blast would lift it again and hurl it on until it settled finally in some crevice or sheltered ravine.

The fugitives no longer heard sounds of firing, and it seemed as though the fighting had ended. In whose favor? That could only be surmised. And, naturally enough, while the whites hoped their friends—for they knew not that they had enemies of their own race so near—had been victorious, the Eagle of the Blackfeet believed his braves had conquered.

After following this precarious trail for half an hour, Pethonista paused and said that they might now wait until the shades of night should settle down upon the earth, under cover of which they could gain the wagon trail undiscovered by the Blackfeet. Though the trio were so anxious to regain their friends, who would be dreading the worst from their long absence, they could not object to the Eagle's reasoning, and composed themselves to wait his pleasure, with what patience they could summon.

The sort of niche in which they paused was well sheltered, even if the storm had not entirely ceased. The air rapidly grew warmer, the sky cleared and the sun shone brightly as it neared the horizon.

While waiting, Pethonista, who appeared to be in unusually good humor, and to feel kindly toward those who had assisted him in his need, explained to Frank the reason why he, though a chief of the Siksikaga Blackfeet, was forced to use so much caution, instead of openly leading them to their friends.

A Blackfoot brave had brought a white scalp to his village, and said that he knew where more pale-faces were hidden, trapping. A war-party was immediately made up, and, guided by the brave, started at once to punish the interlopers. They met Pethonista, who had been out hunting alone, and he resolved to join them, though knowing that, in accordance with the rules of the tribe, he must serve as a common brave, subject to the orders of Koutonipi, a sub-chief, really far below him in rank. On the morning of the storm, Koutonipi sent out scouts to learn whether the trappers had taken the alarm and fled at the death of their comrade, while the main body remained behind to await the report. Pethonista wandered away from them, when the storm caught him. He heard the rifle-shot and struggle upon the edge of the canon, and crept forward, hoping to gain a scalp. But a loosened boulder gave way and crushed him to the ground.

"Me wanted you scalp den," the Eagle confessed, with refreshing frankness, "but you help me. Now me fight fo' you. You my brudder—me like you heap! Koutonipi no take scalp, while Eagle live. But bes' wait—den slip by in dark. Den no trouble."

As the sun sunk to rest, the party resumed their way. Pethonista said that a few hundred yards more would carry them to a point where they could easily regain the level ground, and then a couple of hours would see them safely to the emigrant-trail.

The girls, though worn and jaded, stiff and sore from the bruises they had received during their fearful ride, as well as when they were cast from the overturned "democrat," bore up nobly under the continued strain and fatigue, for they thought the worst was past—that all danger was left behind them. Little did they dream of what the future had in store!

Pethonista suddenly paused and crouched low down, throwing forward his rifle. A suspicious sound—like the sharp click-click of a rifle being cocked—met his ear. But he was too late.

A loud report—a blinding sheet of flame. A shrill cry of agony followed. Frank Maynard flung up his hands, and tottering for a moment, fell backward over the escarpment, down—down!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WITCH OF THE BOILING SPRING.

WHEN the reader is informed that the story told by the unfortunate Bob Harris was true in every particular, the emotions of the disguised outlaw, Mat Mole, can readily be imagined. Yet, naturally brave, despite his villainy, he did not suffer a chance to escape him, even while expressing pantomimic ridicule of the trapper's words. He knew that both could not live through that interview—that the death of at least one must be the finale. He had visited the train to make arrangements with Chris Camp for the final blow. The traitor-guide was gone, so that object was a failure. Thus he was ready when the crisis came, and plunged his knife to the hilt, just over the trapper's collar bone. Then, with a rapid bound, he passed the two emigrants who stood between him and the pass, and was beyond arm's length before a hand could be interposed.

Leaping swiftly from side to side with the skill and wonderful agility that had gained him a name even among the athletic Blackfeet, he darted down the pass. Several bullets, hastily discharged, with little or no attempt at aim, whistled harmlessly past his person, or idly scarred the rocky walls. And a taunting cry broke from his lips, so assured was he of ultimate escape, knowing as he did that none but draught mules remained with the train, the saddle-horses having been ridden by the emigrants setting forth in quest of the run-aways. With his perfect knowledge of the country around, he felt that he could easily elude all pursuers that might follow.

He continued his flight with a swiftness the best Indian runner might have envied, covering the ground with long, swinging strides closely resembling those of a hotly-hunted moose, until the division of the pass was gained. Here, for the first time, he glanced back. No one was in sight. He placed one ear to the ground, but could distinguish no sound above the howling winds.

"Sensible—they haven't chased me!" he muttered, with a satisfied chuckle. "Guess I astonished them a little by my style of shaking moccasin. Then I did kill that varmint! Else he would have followed me, even though my trail led to Hades itself! Ugh! how my blood chilled when I first met those eyes! And I had believed him wiped out, years since. Well, he's taken up the long trail at last—I wish the foul fiend joy of his bargain! Ha! I forgot Warren—what if I should meet them coming back! What story could I tell them? If I could only tell which pass they took!"

Mat Mole closely inspected the rocky ground, but found nothing to guide him with certainty. The snow had been swept clear by the wind, the hailstones had nearly all melted. True, he found places where hoofs had scratched the rocky ground, but these were in both divisions alike.

"Well, I'll risk this one," he finally decided, fearing to delay longer. "It is the shortest, and even if they took it, I may reach open ground before they come back."

Had he chosen the upper pass, Mat Mole would have come into contact with Maynard, Pethonista and the two women. As it was he chose the lower, thus following direct upon the trail of John Warren and his party.

"Curse that Chris Camp! why did he go off when I told him—but I could not have told what I wanted, anyhow, so after all it don't matter. Yet 'twas a glorious day's work! the best I ever did—since now I know that infernal bloodhound is dead. 'Twasn't for nothing my dreaming of him so often of late—but I'll never again wake up with the feeling of his iron fingers throttling me. Ugh! what fools men are, sometimes. Just see what bother and trouble that bit of nonsense has made me. Yet what was she, after all? A dainty bit of flesh and blood, no more. If she had been free! don't suppose I'd have given her a second thought—but I wanted to spoil that good-natured fool's happiness. Yet he must have thought a heap of her—to go crazy over it! But there—confound it all! how the subject does run in my brain—I can't drive it away. Because of that big brute, Harris, I suppose."

The outlaw seemed desirous of forgetting the matter, and muttered to himself of a dozen different things, but the memory could not be entirely banished, curse it as he might. Was it a presentiment—a shadow cast upon his spirit by what the future had in store?

As he reached the mouth of the pass, Mat Mole heard the click of a hoof upon rocks, and glancing hastily to the left, saw a number of horsemen riding toward him, though still at a considerable distance. He recognized the party of emigrants, and crouching low down, ran swiftly away, taking a ledge that he believed would carry him far beyond reach of the mounted men, even if he should be discovered. But a few moments showed him that the ledge abruptly ended. Seemingly a portion of the rock had been broken off during the storm, probably by a boulder falling from the heights above.

The hoof-strokes sounded louder, and served to sharpen his wits. To retreat would be to court a collision that would be awkward, to say the least. Stooping, he glanced over the ledge. A bright light filled his eyes. Clutching a point of rock, he quickly lowered himself over the edge. Clinging thus for a moment, he dropped lightly, and then cautiously stole along a narrow trail until hidden round a slight bend.

"If they feel like following me now, all right. My men will have a few less to deal with to-night," chuckled the bandit, looking to the caps of his revolvers.

But Mole had deceived himself. The horsemen had not observed him, and rode on the sound of their animals' hoofs rapidly dying away in the distance. Yet Mole did not retrace his steps. He crouched there upon the rocks, shielded upon both sides by jutting points over which he could peer, if necessary. He seemed deep buried in thought, and the minutes gradually grew into hours, unheeded.

Then the outlaw awoke to a sense of his surroundings. A suspicious sound had met his ear. He glanced quickly over the point of rock, and a wild glitter filled his eyes. If ever human being was possessed of the devil, Mat Mole was that man then. A horrible expression distorted his face; hatred, revenge, venomous delight—all gathered into one writhing, working mask.

Quick as thought he lifted his rifle and fired. A horrible shriek followed—then a dull, crashing sound as a dark body plunged swiftly down the depths.

Crouching down below the rock, the outlaw uttered a shrill, peculiar whoop—the same that had so startled the Night-walker, earlier in the day—the war-whoop of Creeping Panther, the white sub-chief of the Blackfeet.

"It's the Eagle—I don't think he'll dare dispute my will, after what has passed between us, but if he does—well, I will lose an Indian brother, that's all," muttered Mat Mole, as he drew a revolver and stood erect, though all but his head was concealed behind the rock.

"You seem surprised to meet me here, brother," the outlaw said, using the Siksikaga dialect, which is but little different from that of the other two divisions of the Blackfoot tribe.

"There is a cloud between us," gloomily replied the chief. "You have killed a brave who was under my protection. The pledge of a Blackfoot chief is not to be broken like that of a pale-face squaw."

"I have taken the life of an enemy—of one who has long followed my trail with blood in his eyes. Would you have me sit still and let him tear off my scalp? Is that the advice you give a brother?"

Pethonista hesitated, and cast a glance back to where Minnie and Ada crouched sobbing upon the ledge, tight locked in each other's arms. He seemed in a quandary.

There is one especially sacred bond among the Blackfeet. It is where one brave declares another his brother by a peculiar ceremony. He fills his mouth with pure water, winds his

arms around the chosen one's neck, and while kissing him gies the liquid into the other's mouth. If swallowed, the pledge is ratified, and the chosen brother has entire control over the other's future life. His will is law, in small as well as great matters. An Indian would suffer a thousand deaths rather than disgrace himself and family by proving false to his pledge.*

Mat Mole had once saved the Eagle's life, nearly losing his own in the attempt, and the grateful savage had proclaimed Creeping Panther his brother before the entire tribe. Upon this pledge Mole now depended.

He had fired upon the impulse of the moment, directly upon recognizing Frank Maynard, whom he regarded as a successful rival. Knowing that Pethonista was an inveterate enemy to all pale-faces outside of his own tribe, he naturally supposed the chief had captured him, and as an Indian is bound to defend with his life, if need be, the captive who has yielded to his prowess, Mat Mole feared to await recognition, lest his enemy should escape him, through the Eagle's sense of honor.

Pethonista silently bowed his head at this hint of the bond between them, and Mole saw that his words had not been in vain.

"Let my brother, the Eagle of the great Blackfeet, listen," continued the outlaw, resolved to strike while the iron was hot. "A hunter finds him a fine, fat deer. He sets out upon its trail and never pauses for rest or food or drink, but keeps on and on until the swift deer tires and grows weak, until its steps are short and feeble and it is ready to lie down and die. Another hunter comes by, and puts out his hand and catches the deer that is too tired to escape him, just as the first hunter comes up. Now will my brother tell me which one of the hunters has the best claim upon the game?" abruptly concluded Mat Mole.

"The long trailer," promptly responded Pethonista.

"Good! the eyes of the Eagle are clear—they can read the truth through the deepest cloud. Brother, I am the long trailer—you are the hunter who puts out his hand to stop the game I had run down. For six moons I have been on the trail of this deer; which is best—your claim or mine?"

Pethonista cast a quick glance back upon the sobbing, terrified maidens, and then keenly gazed into the outlaw's eyes. His eyes were boldly met. Mole was playing for a high stake, and had summoned all his wits.

"The Eagle is right. The brown-haired squaw is the game I have trailed so long and hard. She belongs to me. Whose right is better than mine? If my brother started the game first, let him speak, and I will give way to him. If not, then he must not interfere, unless he has forgotten that we are brothers." "A chief never forgets," coldly replied Pethonista. "The light-haired squaw is my brother's. But he does not speak of the other. Does he claim her, as well?"

"No—I care not for her, though she is fair to look upon. She would fill the lodge of a Blackfoot chief well."

"A Blackfoot chief does not hunt a squaw among the enemies of his people," coldly returned Pethonista.

Mat Mole laughed. He cared little for the Eagle's ill-humor, provided that worthy did not interfere further. Bold as he was, he knew that the chief would be more than his match, if they ever came into collision.

"Well, chief, 'tis a bargain, then. I will take my captive—you can do what you like with the other," said Mat Mole, gliding round the point of rocks, and approaching the cowering girls. "Come," he added, roughly, while Pethonista gloomily watched them, "enough of this nonsense. What are you whining about? Because that fool fell over the rock? Bah! there are plenty more men in the world—and better men, too, by long odds. But see—his getting dark, and there is a long trail before us. Come—or must I help you?"

"Who are you—what do you want?" faltered Minnie.

"I'm your master at present—until I take you to my master. What I want is that you follow me, without any more whining. Do you want to stay here all night?"

"No—not take us to our friends, and we will bless—"

"That's just what I mean to do. Your friends are waiting for us, anxious enough, no doubt. Come!"

"He is lying, Minnie—he is trying to deceive us!" cried Ada. "He is no friend—he shot poor Frank."

"Your tongue is too free, girl—but never mind. The chief will bridle it. He means to make you his squaw!"

"Creeping Panther lies!" fiercely interrupted Pethonista.

"I only wanted to close her mouth, chief," said Mole, but the devilish glitter in his eyes belied the humble words. "See here," he added, turning to Minnie, impatiently, "take your choice. Either walk with me quietly, or else I will carry you in my arms, though upon such a narrow trail we will be more apt to find the bottom of the canon together than to reach level ground. But I will wait no longer. Will you walk, or shall I—"

"I will walk. If you mean us evil, may God punish you as you deserve," quietly replied Minnie, arising.

"Thanks for your good wishes! Chief, will you come?"

Pethonista simply bowed, and then extended his hand to aid Ada round the point. She gazed at him keenly for a moment, then accepted the proffered assistance. Something told her this man could be trusted.

Mole led the way, back over the route he had come, followed by Minnie, behind whom came Pethonista and Ada. In a few minutes the place where Mole had descended was reached, and climbing up first, he assisted the others. Then he turned to the Eagle, and said:

"Will the Eagle walk with his brother, or does his trail lie in another direction? He would be glad to have the Siksikaga chief show us how to strike the pale-faces to-night, though Night-Walker is with us."

"Pethonista is not needed where Neepaugh-whese fights; he will follow his own trail," was the cold reply.

Mat Mole smiled grimly. He was right well content that the matter should end thus. He began to look upon the chief as an incumbrance instead of an ally.

"Well, chief, as you please. I will take my squaw and go—you can work your pleasure with the other. Remember that she has friends near, who are looking for her, though they will not be able to trouble us long. We strike them this night, and if you would like to win a scalp or two, you can come and show my braves how to fight."

Then he drew Minnie's hand through his own and strode away, stilling her pleadings not to be separated from Ada, with bitter curses and significant threats that caused her blood to run cold. Little did she suspect who this rough

* A fact. An instance was known as late as the spring of '89.

man really was—least of all recognize in him the polished Gerald Manners, who, a few months previously, had made ardent love to her, who had seemed fairly heart-broken when she refused his proffered hand.

"Where are you taking me—what have I done, that you should treat me so cruelly?" tremblingly asked the maiden.

"I'm taking you where you'll be taken good care of," responded Mat Mole, nasally. "Where you'll be treated like a lady. As to what you've done, I reckon the boss'll tell you. My idea is that you've jilted him some time or another, and he takes this way to get even. I don't know what else he followed you clear from the States for," coolly responded Mole, with a covert glance.

"There is—there must be some mistake. I have wronged nobody—you must have been sent after—"

"Your name is Minnie—daughter of old John Warren?"

"Yes, but—"

"Nary mistake, then. You're the bird the boss wants."

"Who is this man—your master, then?"

"Well, you must know it anyhow, before long, so I guess there's no harm in saying it's Gerald Manners."

"Impossible! you are trying to deceive me—Gerald Manners is a gentleman," cried Minnie, impulsively.

"Yes, I reckon he is—after a way. Anyhow, he means to treat you right. The moment you say you'll marry him, you will be free as air to go where you will."

"I cannot believe that he would stoop to such wickedness—such meanness. But if he should, it would avail him little. Is this the way to win the love of a woman—by—"

"There—your voice is sweet and musical, lady, but you raise it too loud for our safety. These rocks have ears—these hills are full of enemies both to you and me—of cruel, blood-thirsty Indians, who would glory in tearing off that pretty head of hair—or in treating you even worse. We have had talk enough for a time—please let your tongue rest. I should hate to gag a lady, but needs must when the devil drives."

The outlaw abruptly paused and glared keenly around. Was it fancy, or had he indeed heard a low chuckle at his last words? He could see nothing to confirm the suspicion—All was still save the morning wind. And with a curse he thrust back the half-drawn revolver, and strode rapidly forward, holding Minnie firmly by the arm.

She also was silent. Something in the bandit's tone told her that it would be dangerous to cross his will now. Besides, the terrible trials she had that day undergone, had completely broken down her spirit, and she almost unconsciously dragged her heavy feet along.

Mat Mole seemed in a hurry to reach his camp. Better for him had he used more caution, if he had cast an occasional glance behind him. Though 'twould have taken a keen eye to detect the dark figure that dogged their steps. Silently as a shadow the phantom-like form followed them, now almost within arm's length, now lingering behind, almost fading away as it seemed.

But after dogging them thus for nearly two miles, through the hills, the shadow stealthily drew nearer, and then, with a shrill, eldritch scream leaped forward and dealt the startled outlaw a fearful blow upon his head, felling him like a log. The heavy club was again lifted, and the fiery eyes glared down upon the fallen man, like those of a maddened beast. The outlaw did not move. The blow appeared to have been fatal. And then the threatening foot sunk, as the strange being withdrew its foot from the lifeless form, turning to where Minnie had sunk to the ground in a swoon on hearing that horrible, unearthly cry.

The blood-stained club was lifted threateningly as though about to dash itself upon the maiden's defenseless head, but then, with a low, indescribable laugh, the shadow caught Minnie up and glided away. And the moon momentarily shone out, revealing the wild figure of the Witch of the Boiling Springs! (To be continued—commenced in No. 278.)

The Flying Yankee: OR, THE OCEAN OUTCAST.

A NAUTICAL ROMANCE OF 1812.

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MATE'S STORY.

FOLLOWING West into the cabin, for the manner of the mate proved to his commander he had something important to communicate, Noel took a seat and quietly lit a cigar, while he motioned to his officer to follow his example.

"I will not smoke, thank you, captain, for I would use my tongue, as I have much to tell you. We are now drifting like an earless barge upon the ocean, having no aim for the future, no destined port in which to drop our excited anchor."

"You speak truly, West. I am, as it were, a waif, going wherever the wind listeth," answered Noel, sadly.

"And this should not be, sir, for with your will and courage as an officer you should not be an unknown wanderer."

"It were better thus, my good West, for my hand is doubly-dyed with blood, and nowhere have I a haven of rest; but your manner indicates that you have something of importance to say."

"I have, captain," impressively answered the mate, and pouring, from a decanter, a half-glassful of brandy he drank it down, and then, drawing nearer to his commander, said, in a low tone:

"Captain Noel, I am now about to make known to you the story of my life, one of strange adventure, and you will then be able to discover why I asked you so earnestly to cruise in these waters."

"I am, as you see, and as many others have seen, a deformed man, a hideous caricature of the image of my Creator, but within my heart there is no deformity, though God only knows why it is not warped into a shapeless mass of corruption."

"My name, as I told you, is Westley North, and my father was an American who fought bravely through the war of '76 and then went to Mexico, where his wealth and influence soon gained for him a prominent position."

"In Mexico he married, so it was believed, the daughter of a wealthy Mexican grandee, and I am the result of that union, and my deformity was a curse upon my father for having ignobly deceived the trusting Mexican maiden who became his supposed wife; I say supposed, for it was not known then that my father, while a student at Oxford College, England, had secretly married a young girl, the daughter of a poor farmer."

"That poor girl he had cruelly deserted, and returning to America had believed his crime of desertion would never be known."

"But," M. M. proposed and God disposes, and thus my cruel father returned to his elegant hacienda one night to find there, in close conversation with my mother, the wife whom he had so cruelly deserted in England."

"At the sight of my father, my mother, who had just heard the story of the wrong done her, stretched forth her hands and fell fainting to the floor and lay there like one dead, while near her stood the English woman and the man who had so deceived both of them."

"Well, woman, what do you here?" asked my father, sternly.

"I come to claim my husband—or his gold," answered the woman, quietly.

"My parent glanced one moment into the face before him, and read there the wreck his deed had wrought, for all the beauty and refinement were gone, leaving behind only a look of despair, dissipation and sordid gain, for upon her desertion by her husband the woman, driven by despair and persecution, had become hardened into the desperate adventurer."

"Your husband, or his gold?" said my father, sneeringly, repeating her words.

"Yes, Westley North; but I prefer the gold, and gold I will have."

"One moment my father stood in silence, his eyes alternately falling upon the unconscious form of my mother and then turning upon his wife; then he said, slowly:

"If gold is your object, you shall have it; but upon one condition."

"Name it."

"That you await her return to consciousness and then tell her what you have said is a lie—that, formerly, you knew me well, in fact stood in a very close relationship to me, but that we were in no way legally bound to each other, and desiring to obtain from me money you determined to claim me as your husband. Will you do this, Ellen; and as my father spoke he gazed anxiously into the face of his wife."

"Upon one condition, Westley North."

"And that condition is—"

"That you give me one hundred thousand dollars."

"One hundred thousand devils! Woman, I would pay a Mexican to have you murdered first," cried the enraged father.

"And the murder would out. Do you suppose I have not anticipated your worst and provided for it? My murder would hang you up to your own trees in less than twenty-four hours," triumphantly replied the woman.

"Ellen, you have the advantage. I will give you the money, but, so help me God! if ever you cross my path again you shall die."

"So be it; give me the money."

"I have not one-tenth part of that sum by me, so meet at my office, in the city of Mexico, to-morrow at noon, and I will pay it to you; but you must at once leave this country."

"I will trust you, Westley North, for you dare not disobey. Now to restore to consciousness this poor, wronged woman."

"My mother came to life again, and, dearly loving my father, willingly believed the story of the woman, especially when she told it with her own lips."

The mate paused, his face pale as death, and with a frank manner of sympathy and friendship Noel held forth his hand and grasped that of the man before him, saying, quietly:

"My dear friend, from my heart I feel for you."

The mate made no reply immediately, but again poured out a glass of brandy and dashed it off, after which he continued, in the same low and musical tones he had before spoken:

"Yes, the lie was believed, and again my mother was happy, and my father seemingly so, for having paid into the hands of Ellen North the money demanded by her, he had seen her depart for Vera Cruz, from whence she had given it as her intention to sail for England."

"But, let me hasten on, captain."

"I, the only offspring of this ill-starred union, grew to manhood petted, humored and loved, even though I was deformed."

"And through my years of boyhood I loved my father, the man who had cast such a stain upon my birth."

"Yes, I loved him, until one night, as we were returning together from a hunt, he suddenly fell from his horse, shot down by some unseen foe."

"Nearly wild with grief, I raised him in my arms and bore him to a cabin, which I remembered stood near, and roused the innmate, a strange, wild-looking woman whom I had often seen before, and wondered at her light hair and blue eyes, in strange contrast with the people of Mexico."

"The woman met me at the door, and said quietly, as she observed the form in my arms: 'Is he dead?'"

"No, but I fear he will die," I answered, struck with her strange manner.

"Yes, he will die; I intended he should when I fired the shot."

"One look of horror I turned upon her, and then wrought up to madness by her words, I sprang toward her, but waving me back, she cried:

'Hold! would you learn the wrong done me, and you, and one other, by that man? Listen.'

that there is trouble in Mexico, for the entrance of the French into Spain has terminated Spanish power in my native land and brought on a war."

"Yes,"

"Well, my influence, for it is not known that I am an illegitimate son, is considerable in Mexico, raised, not only by the high position held there by the family of my mother, the former influence of my accursed father, but through my own act in giving to the church and State my vast wealth."

"In this war the clergy of Mexico are taking an important stand, and hence will willingly use their influence in my behalf, and my proposition is to at once put the schooner away for Vera Cruz, where I have information that there are several swift-sailing vessels being built, to be commissioned by the present government as cruisers against the French and Spanish, and all who oppose the new party."

"Go on, West; I am listening."

"Ay, sir. Well, by going to Vera Cruz I can obtain for you a commission in the Mexican service, and the command of one of those fleet cruisers."

"West, my noble fellow, I thank you; but it is fair that I should deprive you of this honor, for by education and experience you are in every way fitted for it."

"I may be fitted for it, captain, but I am too sensitive of my hideous form ever to rig it up in the uniform of an officer. Why, it is like dressing up a corpse in marriage garments. No, sir, I follow you, and no other man."

"We will go to Vera Cruz, get the vessel and free commission, which, by the way, from Mexico makes us little better than buccaneers, and then, sailing for an island in the Caribbean, I will man the craft with a crew, as reckless, as daring, as ever trod a deck, for by visiting my old cruising-ground, I can rally around me a set of fellows who will be most willing to take their necks out of the hangman's noose, by shipping as seamen on board a vessel-of-war, even though she flies Mexican colors."

"West, I must confess I had decided upon no plan for the future, and you shall have your way; so go on deck and put the schooner away for Vera Cruz," said Noel, thoughtfully, and with a bright smile upon his face, the mate arose, thanked his commander, and soon gave the necessary orders to the helmsman, and away the fleet vessel flew toward the shores of Mexico.

CHAPTER XII. THE NEW CRUISER.

TOWARD the close of one of those balmy, hazy evenings, so common in southern latitudes, and a month or more after the day upon which the exiled yacht was put away for Vera Cruz—the City of the True Cross, and also, as it is figuratively called upon account of its strength, the "Iron Gate of Mexico"—a schooner of three hundred tons was running briskly along over the bright waters of the Gulf of Mexico, and with fore and main-sail jibed to port and starboard, she was making eight knots wing and wing before the wind, and shoving a wall of foam from either bow.

The schooner had a decided look of mischief about her, for the hull was low in the water, of great length, and considerable breadth of beam amidship, which, with the very heavy sails she carried, spreading canvas enough for a vessel twice her size, made it evident she was built for the purpose of great speed.

Excepting the bright new sails, and a crimson belt running around her hull, everything about her was as black as night, presenting the appearance of a vessel intended for hard sea service.

Along the high and strong bulwarks, of sufficient height to hide the upright form of a man, there appeared no sign of ports, though a glance on decks showed that she carried four long eighteens to a side, while two thirty-two pounder pivots were advantageously mounted fore and aft, to be used as bow and stern chasers, and also as a broadside.

Every line and spar was in place, every rope neatly coiled, and her decks in perfect order, though strangely devoid of the number of men that would have been looked for aboard a vessel of her armament, for but a dozen seamen were visible, including two who held the wheel.

Another strange circumstance about the schooner was that upon each sail was worked in red silk, a large pair of wings, presenting a striking appearance relieved against the white canvas, and of sufficient size to be seen at the distance of miles; also, upon either bow was painted a red wing, instead of a figure-head.

Upon the quarter-deck stood two officers, who, though dressed in the gorgeous uniform of the Mexican navy, the reader will at once recognize as Noel and West, for their visit to Santa Cruz had been most successful; a swift sailing vessel had been purchased, out of his own means, by the young American, after he had disposed of his own yacht, and he had found that West had not exaggerated his influence with his government, for the commission of a free rover, under the flag of Mexico, had been readily granted.

With great care Noel had attended to the armament and fitting out of his vessel, which he manned up with the crew of the yacht, for it was his intention to further follow the advice of West, and run to the haunt of the Caribbean pirates for the requisite number of men for the schooner, well knowing that they would prove a daring and determined set, for his former experience in fighting them had shown him both their prowess and courage.

With the bitterness of his crime rankling at his heart, and feeling himself an exile, a fugitive flying from justice, he had named the schooner the Red Wing, and had the strange but appropriate device worked upon her sails and painted upon her bows.

After running wing and wing down the Gulf for some hours, the schooner's course was changed, so as to bring the wind abeam; the foresail was jibed to leeward, the sheets drawn flat aft, and, close-hauled upon the wind, the graceful vessel bent bravely to the influence of the stiff breeze.

"She sails like a witch, West; let us try her with more sail," said Noel, gazing with pride upon his beautiful vessel. In obedience to orders there arose from the deck a fluttering mass of canvas to the fore and main-topmasts, and setting into place were two huge gaff-top-sails, which greatly added to the speed of the schooner.

"Upon the deck of this fleet craft I fear no vessel afloat," said Noel, after watching for a while the action of the Red Wing under the heavy pressure and noting her increased speed.

"Ay, captain; we can show our heels to all Americans, and easily run away from any Spaniard we cannot whip."

The wind favoring, noon of the following day saw the beautiful schooner standing majestically into a miniature bay that indent-

the shores of a small island of the West Indies.

West had the helm, and skillfully guided the cruiser through the dangerous channel, while at his side stood Noel, his brow dark and gloomy, for memory would haunt him, and he could not but remember the circumstances of his former visit to that island, when in the boats of the Vulture he had boldly attacked the pirates in their stronghold and broken up, as he had believed, their haunt.

Suddenly from the foliage-clad hillside there came a puff of smoke, a roar broke the Sabbath-like stillness of the scene, and the next moment an iron ball whistled across the schooner's bow.

"They are wide awake, captain, I see; so we might as well display the private signals," said West.

Noel at once ran up to the foremast head a white flag with a scroll of parchment engraved in the center, while from the peak fluttered a large ensign of crimson, white and black.

A moment more and the same colors were displayed in the hands of two men, who stepped from their green retreat and waved them vigorously toward the schooner.

"All right, captain; now we will go ashore, taking two men in the gig with me, while you can stand off and on in this little bay. If I do not return in two hours' time, you may know I have been treacherously dealt with, and at once put to sea, and return to Vera Cruz, where you can get a crew, such as they are."

"If successful, I will soon be back and bring with me the young commander of this piratical haunt, who, if I do not misjudge him, will be only too anxious to take his head out of the hangman's coil by vailing it in the Mexican flag."

A moment more the ex-buccaneer left the schooner; and taking the helm himself, Noel, with the Red Wing under reduced sail, stood off and on to await his return.

Keeping his eye directed landward, he saw his officer run ashore, where he was met by a number of men, who appeared to greet him warmly, and watching them narrowly for a while, he observed a half-dozen of the pirates enter the gig, which at once put off for the schooner.

As the schooner put about, the gig boarded her, and Noel having relinquished the helm to Hart, his second officer, met West and the pirates at the gangway.

"Captain Muriel, this is the commander of the Red Wing," said West, as he stepped upon the schooner's deck; and at his words, there advanced toward Noel a man of hardly more than twenty-three, with a slight but firmly-knit frame, and a face which, shaded as it was by long, dark, waving hair, and no beard, was almost of feminine beauty.

Yet his compressed lips and eager, piercing eyes, denoted stern resolve and a brave spirit beneath the offensive mask, while his easy manner, and graceful form, attired in a stylish dark uniform, made him appear as though the taint of piracy had never stained his young life.

The young Spaniard, for such was his nationality, had won a reputation as a most daring and skillful buccaneer, throughout the waters of the West Indies, but other than as a bold sea-robber the name of Muriel had never been connected with an act of cruelty toward the defenseless.

"Captain Muriel, I have often heard of you, and in battle we have met; but of that time we will not now speak. You are welcome on board the Red Wing, and so saying, Noel offered his hand to the young chief.

"I thank you, sir; I have come at the suggestion of my old comrade here, and right gladly do I hear that there is a fair prospect ahead for myself and men, for we have been ashore for some time now, having had our schooner sunk in an action with the United States brig Vulture."

"Indeed!" said Noel, while his face flushed slightly.

"Yes, sir; they caught us napping, and we had to fight it out. I lost my vessel, and with my crew fled in the boats, and the next day captured a large coffee drogher off the Cuban coast, armed it with an eighteen-pounder taken from an old dismantled fort on the lagoons, and it served to bring us here to our rendezvous."

"You chased a pleasure carrera off Cuba, I believe?"

"I did, captain; I intended to overhail and take her for my own use until I could get a craft to suit me better; but a plucky little American yacht drove me from my prey."

"Captain Muriel, I commanded that yacht, and I was only too happy in being able to save Don Octavio Guido and his lovely daughter."

"Don Octavio Guido! Was it his carrera?"

"Suddenly asked the young Spaniard, turning deadly pale."

"Yes."

"My God! Captain Noel, in saving that carrera from capture you did me a favor I shall never forget," said the Spaniard, impressively, and he held forth his hand toward the American, and after a pause continued:

"The fire from the yacht injured the drogher considerably, and in a leaky condition, I ran her here, where we have been ever since; but you have a proposal to make?"

"Yes, sir; this vessel is commissioned by the Mexican government, and is destined to cruise against Spain and France. She is as fleet as a bird, a staunch craft, and well-armed and equipped as you see."

"Yet I need a crew of brave fellows to man her guns, for, as you see, and I frankly tell you, I have but a dozen men with me."

"West here, will not accept a position as one of my chief officers, so I give him that of boatswain, which he desires, and offer to you the rank of my first lieutenant; to any man of your crew, whom you may recommend, the position of second officer, while Mr. Hart, one of my yacht's crew, will be my third."

"Under the Mexican flag you will no longer be branded as outlaws, as you are now, and I trust prize money will be plenty."

"Captain Noel, as frankly as you make the offer, so frankly do I accept your kindness for myself and crew, for circumstances, not choice, made me a buccaneer."

"In regard to a crew I can bring you, within the hour, a hundred brave fellows, only too willing to serve on the decks of the Red Wing."

After a conversation of half an hour more, Muriel, the newly-appointed lieutenant, went ashore to communicate his tidings to his men, and upon the following morning the beautiful schooner set sail from the island, her decks crowded with a hardy, daring crew, attired in the Mexican uniform, and ready to fight their guns to the bitter end, for one and all were at once won over by Noel's frank and manly manner toward them.

CHAPTER XIII. THE SEA ROVER'S GIFT.

FROM her sailing out of the bay of the Corsair Island, the Red Wing commenced her ca-

reer as a cruiser, and ere many months became known in the Southern seas as one of the most daring vessels that ever floated.

Constantly on the alert, and flying from sea to sea, Noel soon gained the name of an implacable foe to Spain and France, and though considered by the navies of the world as little else than a free rover, he yet won the admiration of his foes, and the respect of the English and American vessels-of-war then cruising in the Gulf of Mexico.

Entering more and more into the spirit of his life of adventure and danger, the young commander daily plotted to surprise and overwhelm his enemies, and few crafts were there that could long lead the fleet Red Wing in a chase, or that dared to meet her in an engagement at close quarters.

Who was her brave and skillful commander none knew, though there were many conjectures regarding his name and nationality, some representing him as a huge, fierce giant, an Irishman by birth, others saying that he was none other than the renowned Lafitte, while still more professed to believe he was a woman in disguise, one whom disappointed affection had driven to crime and piracy.

Many were the vessels-of-war that had been sent forth to hunt down and capture the dreaded rover, but still the daring cruiser plowed the seas, and in defiance her sharp prow would cut the very waters guarded by Spain's strongest forts, and her anchors were cleared away beneath the very guns of the Moro, those who gazed upon her lying quietly at anchor, believing her to be some graceful trading schooner, until when the shadows of night came on, some desperate act of courage would alarm the harbor, and in triumph the Red Wing would fly seaward, after having boldly entered the Havana waters in disguise and captured or scuttled the unsuspecting merchantman, who little feared danger beneath the shadows of the forts.

It was, when flying oceanward, out of the harbor of Havana, one night, and leaving behind a scene of dread and confusion, for Noel had daringly run in and fired a large powder-ship from Madrid, which had escaped him in a fog at sea, that the Red Wing headed across the Gulf with every sail that would draw.

Noel was pacing the deck, greatly elated at his last successful adventure, when his lieutenant, Muriel, advanced and asked:

"What is your course, captain?"

"Put her away for Vera Cruz, Muriel, for when in Havana I learned news that will decide me in changing my plans somewhat, but—"

"Sail ho!" suddenly broke in the look-out from the mast-head.

"Where away, my man?" was Noel's quick response.

"Dead ahead, sir; as well as I can tell in the moonlight she is a large vessel-of-war," returned the look-out.

"Ay, ay; keep a sharp eye upon her. Mr. Muriel, call the crew to quarters, and Mr. Hart see that every sail is in readiness for use," ordered Noel, and ascending to the mast-head, glass in hand, he soon was gazing intently upon the strange sail.

After looking steadily through his night-glass for some moments he rapidly descended to the deck, and, calling to West, his boatswain, to follow him, he entered the schooner's cabin.

"Be seated, West, for I have made a discovery."

The ungainly boatswain seated himself quietly upon a velvet divan, and his commander, after a moment's pause, said, in a low tone:

"West, my good friend, when ashore in Havana I learned that hostilities had commenced between the United States and England."

"Indeed! I half-suspected that war would follow the late high-handed outrages of England."

"War has followed, and I am determined I will not remain an idle spectator, but join my country's service."

"Are you mad, Captain Noel? Why, in instant and ignominious death would follow," suddenly cried the boatswain.

"Did I give myself up, yes; but I do not intend that, and have now called you to the cabin to make known my plan."

"I am listening, captain."

"Well, I am now en route to Vera Cruz, to tender my resignation to the Mexican authorities, and, having done so, I will at once refit the schooner, run her to the American coast, and get my number in crew complete, for we have suffered considerably of late in men, and then under simply my flag of the Red Wing, I will cruise, as an unknown vessel, against the navy of England."

"The schooner, as you know, belongs to me; Muriel and the crew are no lovers of England, and I anticipate no resistance to my wishes; but, if I have any, I shall put it down with an iron hand."

"Here is my hand in the enterprise, captain, and gladly do I second you, and I see no obstacle in the way of perfect success."

"I knew you would second me, West, and hence I have first made known to you my intentions."

"Thank God, though our beautiful schooner has frequently run the gauntlet of American guns, we have never returned a shot upon the flag, and once, as you remember, came very near being sunk by our non-resistance to that plucky little cruiser, which the schooner could have taken in a ten minutes' combat."

"Yes, I remember that you have nobly acted toward your country, in spite of the wrongs it has done you," answered West, in earnest tones.

"Wrongs that, mayhap, I brought on; but of that I will not speak now."

"As it is, we are looked upon as a pirate, for the Mexican flag is really no protection, as our experience with the navies of the world has shown, and we are hunted down with persistent determination wherever we are found upon the high seas."

"Branded as a corsair I may be in the future, but yet my native land shall never say I forgot my allegiance or struck a blow against her, while for America I shall hunt down her foes."

Now to the present. When I ascended to the mast-head, I observed two instead of one sail in sight, and a close observation through my glass proved one to be a large English sloop-of-war, as well as I could make out by her rig, and she was maneuvering so as to get the wind of a brig-of-war some three miles distant from her, and that vessel was one you and I know too well."

"Hal the Vulture!"

"Yes; the brig-of-war was the Vulture."

"What a determined enemy she has proven to us! One would almost believe, Captain Noel, that she was sent out especially to take us, well knowing who it is that commands this schooner," said West, thoughtfully.

"No, they do not suspect, I am assured, that you and I are here; but, Ainslie is a dashing, gallant fellow, and the several other cruisers sailing under the Mexican colors having proven themselves nothing but pirates, as have the

Carthaginians, and attacked American commerce, our navy consider it their duty to retaliate, and the Vulture would be only too happy to overhaul the Red Wing."

"Doubtless you are right, captain; but to the strange sail—an engagement will follow."

"Without doubt," for Alden Ainslie and the Vulture crew will never fly from an enemy because he is their superior in guns and men. Hark!"

The deep boom of a heavy gun suddenly rolled across the waters, followed by another and another in quick succession.

In an instant Noel sprang to the deck, followed by West.

"Captain Noel, yonder two vessels are maneuvering to engage each other," said Lieutenant Muriel, as his commander stood beside him.

"Yes, there will be an action, and a desperate one."

"It seems rash for yonder brig to meet his adversary, which, if I mistake not, is an Englishman."

"Yes, rash; but the battle is not always to the strong. The brig is the American vessel-of-war, Vulture, and it is my intention, Muriel, to hang off and watch the combat; so keep the schooner in her present course."

"Ay, ay, sir," promptly answered Muriel, although astonished that his commander should wish to endanger the schooner in getting in range of a fight between two vessels-of-war.

Following the first guns, which had been fired from the Englishman, came a broadside from the Vulture, after which the two vessels, continuing to draw nearer together, poured in a hot and damaging fire upon each other.

A little more than a mile distant, the Red Wing appeared to be unnoticed by the fighting sea-warriors, as, with a heavy spread of canvas, and her men at her guns, she bounded swiftly over the moonlit waters, heading directly toward the scene of carnage; but from the schooner's decks the flash of the battle-lanterns, the crash of timbers, the stern orders of the officers and loud cries and cheers of the crews, mingling with the roar of the guns, were distinctly heard, and all on board the Red Wing gazed alternately upon the terrible scene, and then upon the tall and manly form of their commander, who stood with one hand resting upon the bulwarks, and his eyes firmly fixed upon the action.

All but one wondered at his strange course, but none dared to inquire why he was thus running his vessel into the lion's mouth, and in silence gazed upon him.

"Mr. Muriel, an unlucky shot from the Englishman has carried away the American's tiller-ropes, and she is getting worsted."

"Ay, ay; they are pouring it upon her hot and heavy," answered the young Spaniard; and after a moment he continued:

"See! if she does not strike soon they will sink her."

"At the guns, there! Double shot all! Aim at yonder large sloop-of-war. Ready, all—fire!"

The wild, ringing tones of the order awoke the crew of the Red Wing like magic, for they knew that their commander was terribly in earnest, and although they never had fired upon an English vessel-of-war before, they unhesitatingly obeyed, and a fierce broadside of flame shot from the schooner, and a hailstorm of iron was hurled upon the Englishman, then but half a mile distant.

"Stand ready to wear ship—ready about—forward and aft there, keep those thirty-two's playing with the broadside guns—ready, all—fire!"

The voice of Noel arose loud and clear, and his orders were obeyed with promptness by the crew, who, accustomed to scenes of carnage, were in their element when fighting their guns, and in a few moments' time the graceful and obedient schooner had delivered half a dozen broadsides from both starboard and port, and with terrible effect, for the foremost of the Englishman had been cut away, the mizzen-topmast was tottering, and the bowsprit hung dangling in the water as the vessel broached to.

Completely hidden in the smoke of her guns, the schooner still bore down nearer and nearer, the crew getting their range from the orders of the man at the masthead, who gave them directions how to fire, as the topmast of the Englishman was distinctly visible to him above the smoke.

"She has come to, sir, and I think is unmanageable," cried the man from the mast-head of the schooner.

"Where away, sir?" called out Noel.

"Directly off the starboard bow, sir."

"Helmsman, let her fall off—steady; aim low there at the guns—fire!"

The order was quickly obeyed, and the crashing of timbers and cries of the wounded proved that the iron messengers had found their target.

But still the roar of the British guns was heard, responded to by those from the Vulture, and then before the bows of the Red Wing loomed the massive hull of the sloop-of-war, which still nobly fought, though between two fires.

"At the guns there, double load with grape—steady as you are, helmsman—fire!"

A wall of flame, a hurrying of iron, a roar, a crash, shrieks and groans followed, a lull of an instant, and then a cry came from the Englishman:

"Cease firing; we strike!"

"Haul down your flag, and a boat from the American brig-of-war Vulture will board you!" cried Noel, in a voice that was heard by the crews of each vessel.

"Ay, ay; but what schooner is that?" came the sullen reply from the Englishman, but no answer was returned from the Red Wing, which, still enveloped in smoke, floated swiftly away before the wind, leaving the vessel she had so nobly aided to capture a prize to the Vulture, which, but for the timely aid of the schooner, would have had to strike her colors to her far more powerful adversary.

As much astonished as were the Englishmen at the strange conduct of the schooner, the officers and crew of the Vulture watched her rapid departure, floating, as it were, on the smoke of her guns, and it was some moments ere an order was given to man a cutter to go aboard the prize, for all had distinctly heard Noel's remark that a boat from the Vulture would take possession of the surrendered vessel-of-war.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 276.)

WE have, in Mrs. E. F. ELLET'S "LOVE IN A MAZE," to commence in the next issue, a fine love story, and yet one full of adventure and dramatic situations. The romance of a young girl's career, in the struggle for fame as a singer, is made the thread of a very striking delineation of life in "artistic circles," as well as in the social world which deems brown-stone fronts and a carriage necessary to position and influence. The contrast with the "highly-seasoned" and intense narrative of Mrs. Fleming's "Victoria," is great, but it will have a charm of its own that will captivate all readers.



THE SWEET CONFESSION.

A little maid of summers but a few,
With golden hair and eyes of heavenly blue,
Out of the dark in love tones softly cried,
And in a moment I was by her side.

Her little heart beats strongly against mine,
Around me close her loving arms entwined,
While kisses rain upon my face and neck,
As if love's argosy had sudden wreck.

What means it all? Why at this hour impelled
To grant the sweets coquettishly withheld?
What tells the darling that she should delight
To give such kisses only in the night?

"When it is night"—her lips my own lips touch—
"I love you so very, very much!"
And don't you love us in the daytime, too,
My little darling? For we all love you."

"Oh, yes!"—her arms still hold me very tight—
"But then I love you more when it is night!"
And then she whispered, tremulous her breath,
"I want to hug and kiss you all to death!"

Oh, sweet confession! Ever 'tis love's way
To wear a careless look throughout the day;
But when the night steals on and rolls apart,
The curtains that have hung before the heart,

Our lips make haste their secrets to reveal,
The silver bands become locks of steel,
And, won to nobler heights by sweetest grace,
We see our heart's beloved face to face.

MRS. PRIM ON SCANDAL.

No, my dear—goodness be thanked!—no person can say that I ever scandalized any one, not even my worst enemy, no matter what he or she may do! I've had chances enough to talk, if I had a mind to, as every one in this town knows full well. Of course, living here right in the high street of the town, I can't help seeing a great many queer things; and when our windows are open and the blinds shut in the summer-time, I can hear them, too! But I never repeat them—I scorn to make mischief. I never lips a word, except when I get hold of some safe person like you, my dear, that I know I can trust. And if a body is never to open her mouth among her own intimate friends, why, the world isn't worth living in—is it? But that isn't scandal, you know. I hate and abhor that! Just as much as you do, and I don't think any one can say I was ever guilty of it in all my life.

But then, as I said before, it isn't for want of the chance. Why, only last evening, as ever was, who do you think I saw walking up here, in the bright moonlight, as brazen as you please, but Miss Lennox and Colonel Parker! Fact, as sure as you sit in that chair! And they were walking close together, and talking so confidentially.

I suppose you know all about that disgraceful affair with the schoolgirls! No! My dear, you must really live in the ark! Why, they have been writing a lot of anonymous letters to people here in the town, and the postmaster suspected what was up at last, and he just kept a quiet look-out, and caught some of them putting the letters in. I don't know what Miss Claket will do. Expect them, I hope; great girls like those have no business to act so!

There's Mrs. Price gone by. I presume she has been down to chaperon a fowl, or get a half-penny or two taken off a joint of meat. She's the stingiest thing, my dear; it would really make your heart ache to hear of the way she manages and contrives! And there is her husband, one of the richest men in the town, and folks do say that he can't get a decent meal of victuals in his own house. Wouldn't you—

What! going? Can't you stay any longer? Well, do come again, very soon, won't you? Good-by!

Thank goodness, she has gone! I really thought she was going to stay all night. I heard a nice story about her, by the way, last week—how shamefully she treats all her servants! Suppose she thinks I don't know it. I might make mischief enough in her family, if I chose. But I abhor scandal.

The Letter-Box.

LUCY T. (Cleveland, Ohio) writes:
At a public gathering may a lady ask for introductions to such persons as she wishes to become acquainted with? Suppose a lady requests a friend to bring a certain gentleman and introduce him, would it not be very rude of the gentleman to refuse to come? If a gentleman takes a lady to a place of entertainment, is he at liberty to leave her at any time in the evening to entertain himself?

Certainly, a lady has the privilege of asking for any introductions that she has every reason to believe will in nowise prove disagreeable to any of the parties concerned.

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It is the story of an orphan girl's life. Gifted with a rare gift of song, and inspired with a desire for fame, she tries to force a way for herself—with what trials and perils the chapters reveal.

It is, equally, a story of the life of a systematic flirt and coquette, whose career is drawn out with strong lights and shades.

There are involved, besides, the relations and experiences of two other girls, types of womanhood which all "good society" presents.

Then comes the stage prima donna, who is evidently a photographed character, in whose doings we read the secrets of stage reputations and stage management.

The young orphan girl's guardian is a lawyer whose conduct brings out a fine nature, in which the reader soon becomes absorbingly interested, and in whom we have the true hero of the charming romance.

In the orphan's uncle, Mrs. Ellet presents a man such as occasionally appears to disgrace human nature, who, throughout the story, is an evil genius and intriguer, yet lends to the drama a deep and exciting interest.

It is a serial greatly to be enjoyed in these summer days when, driven from work, the mind seeks enjoyment in 'the best things of the best authors'—in which category Mrs. Ellet is a recognized power. "Love in a Maze" is one of her very best creations.

Sunshine Papers.

A National Institution.

MANY places in our land are renowned in story, described in song, and glorified on canvas. From the pines of Maine and white firs of Oregon to the sunny glades of Florida and chaparrals of Texas, and the ghostly hands of Atlantic to the kisses and embraces of Pacific, there is scarce a vale or mountain, a flood or field, a sweep of prairie, brake, sunny farmlands, or tangle of forest, that has not been breathed of to the world by some one, somewhere, somehow. Nor is there any kind of life, from that passed in the palace, the wildlands, the street, from the merchant nabob's, the highest official's, to the gamins', the desperado's, the convict's, the slave's, that has not been a theme for artist, novelist, poet, and orator. But where, oh, where! shall be found the mortal who has given to the public, in melodious sonnet, in dainty gem of art, or graceful tribute of prose, a faithful portrayal of the comforts, the conveniences, the sweet ties, the unalloyed bliss, of life in a modern boarding-house?

That this oversight of description, and praise, and glorification, is unintentional, for the sake of justice, and an unalloyed belief in the high standard of our fellow-beings' appreciative powers, and the refined, delicate, and tender feelings of respective landladies, we would fain believe. And, therefore, undertake the task of elevating boarding-houses to the glory they so deserve, though with a miserable feeling of inadequacy to perform with full credit the delightful and honorary duty.

The modern boarding-house we believe to be a purely American institution. The reasons for this must be accounted for by national habits and advancement. In other countries than our own, where the men are still so allied to barbarism as to consider themselves heads of their family, where they marry to make a home and rear a family, where they enter such a state of wedlock and live in such manner as circumstances fitly ordain, only rising to higher levels as steady, honest meed of labor and career gravitates them upward; where the women are so like their savage ancestry as to love children and make care for their offspring the highest duty of life, where customs are so dark-aged and unorthodox as to rear women physically vigorous; where refinement, and culture, and intellect, is so little advanced that the women devote time to their homes and husbands instead of to the elevating influences of considerations of the newest mode of looping a skirt and tying a ribbon, and pursuit of the latest publications in sensational literature; where the ruling passion of men, and women, and children, is not to do nothing and have everything—to live, every one, a little better than their neighbors, there are fewer of these boarding-houses that are such necessary and, as we intimated, delightful places of residence. But, in America, where we rush matters of every kind; where means of culture are free to every class; where each man aims to make a fortune in a day, and each woman sighs for exemption from any duty, the modern boarding-house has become a national institution, and, as that, must no longer remain unknown to fame.

As a generality, its official head is a woman. We say official head, for if there is a man in the case, he is not accounted as much by the enterprising mistress; he may be useful to send of errands, and wait on the boarders, and keep the kitchen utensils tinkered up, but he never figures in the bills—nor much concerning them. It is universally conceded that a widow, especially if she have some daughters who are below par in the matrimonial market, has the best right to open a boarding-

house. It is a marvelous matter how she sustains all the trials and tribulations which she repeats, like a zealot counting her beads, to each new-comer. Somehow, the afflicted woman survives—survives, also, the unending grief she airs daily for her lamented "poor, dear Mr. Jones!" This is one of the blisses of residing in a boarding-house—to feel that you are honored by being the benevolent and sympathetic being who brings comfort to the widow's heart by listening to her sorrows; and even if temptation to be deaf and uncondoning assail you, in spite of your natural depravity you are forced to better things.

Your room, its size in inches equalized by its price, is always cheerful, and so cozy that you wonder how benighted mortals can endure the barren loneliness and cold space of more than one room. What is a home with rag carpet, and white muslin shades, and a cradle, to this room with a resurrection-Brussels, yellow washstand, black bedstead, red bureau, unmated wash-bowl and pitcher, one torn towel, three trunks and two dismembered chairs? It does not get swept even; to be sure, once a week a chambermaid goes in with a broom and shakes the broom at it in a show of displeasure; the mattress is to be one-sided, and its bumps would puzzle a phrenologist; the sheets are not always fine, or white, or whole—though they are often holy—or changed regularly; you do not have any slips all prettily ruffled as in the old room at home; you are engaged in perpetual warfare with the servants to get a clean towel a day; the ewer does not hold water enough to accommodate two persons, and the water is norelation whatever to the cool flood in which you were wont to plunge your cheeks in childhood.

But—all these little items are the thorns of the crown that makes the martyr so illustrious; are you not repaid a thousandfold? Do you not wear a handsome new business suit each season, and indulge in a cane and seal-ring, and your wife promenades the town in a silk as handsome as Mrs. Sensible, whose husband is worth fifty thousand while you only earn twelve hundred a year?

If you long for congenial society and refreshing conversation, and cheery quiet, what place so inviting as the parlor—with its furniture, and beauties, and comforts, told in four words—carpet, piano, table, chairs—where Mrs. Jones' two daughters lounge over Dumas' novels or shriek at the piano that would do discredit to a calithumpian band. Here is Mr. Prey, who is a petting-fogging lawyer; Miss Simper, who smiles eternally, but does not know what the Central talk can be all about; Mrs. Gab, who may have been a barmaid once upon a time, if one judge by her cheek and slang; Mr. Starer, an unintelligent foreigner, who looks like a counterfeiter and eyes the married women as if it was a duty.

And, oh, the elegancies of the dining-room! Meats always lovingly aloft in shimmering seas of grease, and charming as a Chinese puzzle in their exciting suggestions of the mysteries to be divulged preparatory to their severance. Plates that have grown gray with age, and possess refrigeratory powers of reducing to a congealed state, instantaneously, whatever is introduced to their surface. Coffee like nectar of the gods—well, not as strong it might be, and bread-pudding for dessert, in a melancholy succession of days.

Such are the delights of the boarding-house. When one remembers how small and unpretentious one's home would be, and how much more economy must be displayed in attire, and that she must sweep, and dust, and concoct dainty desserts, and wash dishes, and he must smoke a trifle less, perhaps help do the marketing and split the kindlings, who would not choose the clean, comfortable, convenient, charming boarding-house life.

Away with duty, simplicity, health, hospitalities, content, children, home, status, love; and all hail the modern boarding-house!

What do we refined, and cultivated, and indolent, and aspiring Americans care for sweet memories, and sacred duties, and a holy union of heart and love in winning fair content and grand worth, if we can live fast, dress gay, put on airs, cut a spurge, outshine some neighbor? Then down with old-time dreams of all beautiful and holy marital duties, and sing songs of praise to the refuge of shirks—modern boarding-houses!

A PARSON'S DAUGHTER.

"I'D SOONER STARVE."

I HAVE heard people say they wouldn't starve their lives out, working for a mere pittance; they would be nobody's drudge; they would starve first. It struck me as being a kind of independent speech, and at the same time a very foolish one. I know of a great many good folks who have sense enough to keep a situation when they get it, and put up with their wages, be they ever so little, rather than starve. This talking about starving and the reality of it are entirely separate things. If it is a hard thing to imagine, how keen must the experience be. I know it must be hard to toil hour after hour until wearied and worn out, and then but get just enough to feed and clothe oneself, yet, wouldn't it be foolish to throw up one's hands and wouldn't it be harder to have nothing whatever? A certain princess, upon hearing of a case of a person starving to death, exclaimed, "sooner than starve to death I'd eat brown bread." That is exactly some people's ideas of starving. They think if they were deprived of the ice creams and Washington pies, they could exist on the brown bread. But, if the brown bread were wanting, what then? Starving to death on brown bread is a very different thing to starving on nothing.

A certain individual desired one of his manuscript plays copied and called on a young author for that purpose. In course of conversation the individual asked the young author what he received for a sketch when written for the press. The answer was "five dollars." "Five dollars!" exclaimed the individual. "Sooner than write at that niggardly price, I'd starve to death."

My young friend had no particular desire to starve to death, and told the individual so. He also told him that he thought it a very good price for a tyro and so long as he could get that, and until he could do better, he was quite unwilling to change his daily dinner of beefsteak to thin and empty air.

Well, I wouldn't work for such a price. Why, I get fifteen dollars for merely altering a drama to suit a limited company," replied the individual.

My friend did the desired copying and presented his bill, which was quite reasonable. The individual who considered—or professed to consider—that every one was worthy of his hire endeavored in every way to beat down the price. He evidently considered that he should be paid large prices for his own work, but ought to pay those who worked for him, a mere nothing. My friend had a good chance

to remark that he would sooner starve than accept so great a reduction, but he didn't do anything of the kind. He was not willing to starve, and he would not take a cent off of what was but a just demand. That's where I felt like patting him on the shoulder and exclaiming "good boy."

We cannot be quite as independent as we would wish to be until we have enough to be independent with. Until we can better ourselves we should be content with what we have. It is absolute and downright wickedness to throw away the means God gives us to work with, simply because we don't think we get enough pay for doing the work. The cry of "Death before dishonor" might have for its companion the words, "Life before starvation."

Little by little we rise and those who throw away that little will never amount to anything. No one will help them because they will not help themselves.

Opportunities are not so plenty as some seem to imagine, and the best thing to do is to be satisfied with what we have.

There have been merchants who have said they would sooner starve than be seen carrying a bundle. Crashes have come and ruined these same merchants. Then these same merchants have been glad enough to secure the situation of porter and to carry bundles sooner than starve. It proves that we think we will do just exactly opposite what we really will. When starvation is far off we do not realize what a terrible thing it is but when its foot is on our threshold the case is far different, as many a poor soul can tell you.

EVE LAWLESS.

SELF.

How many people there are in this world who are so wrapped up in their own pleasures and enjoyments as to be utterly heedless of the comfort of others, and who seem to ignore every one but their own selves. This was particularly made manifest to the writer, not long since, as he was obliged to wait a couple of hours in the depot of one of the railway junctions.

In two places were printed signs, placed in so conspicuous a manner that no one could help reading them, or at least seeing them. They bore the words: "No smoking allowed here." It is not my intention to enter a protest against smoking, for every one must judge for himself whether it is a pleasure or not, but I did think it most singular to see so many men with lighted cigars in their mouths, with those words staring them in their faces. I was charitable enough to believe the smokers were foreigners, and could not read our language, but I was disabused of that idea when I heard them converse in good English.

I could not much wonder at the sign, for several reasons:

1st. There were lady attendants at the refreshment-stands, who, I imagine, did not care to have their clothes scented with tobacco.

2d. The tobacco smoke entering into the composition of pies and other edibles does not make them very palatable, nor any sweeter from its effects.

3d. There are a great many people so constituted as to be made quite ill from inhaling the smoke of a cigar or pipe. It causes a nausea, and spoils all the pleasure of a journey.

To what must we lay this obliviousness to rules? Is it selfishness, thoughtlessness or boorishness? What is the use of spending money for signs, of making rules if they are unheeded? I was surprised that no one gave these smokers a hint as to the rule they were breaking, and mentioned the fact to the depot-master. His reply was very characteristic: "If they cannot read common printed words enough to obey them, they cannot be made to comprehend any words I could say."

Perhaps he was about right. It was certainly a very natural supposition. I have no desire to say aught against the lovers of the "weed," for, if they enjoy it, it is none of our business, but I think they must acknowledge there are places where they may, with great propriety, refrain from indulging in its use.

It is this non-conformity to rules, this heedlessness of just requests, this habit of making others uncomfortable which renders traveling so disagreeable to many persons. In traveling, most people do not bear in mind others' comforts or inconveniences, and yet these very transgressors consider it a very hard thing if they are inconvenienced in the least.

If we would but try to put self in the background for a short time far more neighborly would we all become. It may seem impossible always to do this, but practice will soon become custom, and we shall then take a pleasure in what may now seem disagreeable or impossible. If we only would "Love our neighbor as ourself" there'd be a deal more sunshine in the world than there is now.

F. S. F.

Foolsap Papers.

Summer Notes.

It is one of the greatest pleasures which I can enjoy to stand upon the north end of this week and look far across the summer through these patent spectacles of mine and see what-
ever is to happen.

I observe that this will be one of the most remarkable summers that was ever here, there or summers else, and is worthy of note—especially of mine.

The earth is approaching the sun at the rate of a million miles every day, and as the roads are good, in all probability about the middle of this summer it will be close to the sun, and I notice already that the earth is absorbing about all the hotness which the sun at present can produce with its present facilities.

The furnaces in the sun will be in full blast about the middle of July, for hickory wood and coal are plentiful up there this season, there having been no strikes in the mines or in the woods.

Sieve hats will be generally worn this summer, and summer coats of musketo-bar will be the prevailing fashion.

Umbrellas will be carried—off as usual.

Debts in the intense heat will expand to an unusual size, and people will be too soft to pay them.

Nothing in the world will be more pleasant than falling off a log into the river this summer.

In the city your eye will hanker for something green, and you will gaze into the looking-glasses, or across at your neighbor.

During the expanded month of August you can't be able to measure the heat with a ten-foot pole, and you'll only be able to guess at it and then will fall short.

If you want to heap coals of fire upon the heads of your enemies this summer will be the very time to try the experiment, as they will be apt to appreciate it more, and it will have a better effect.

This summer will be wrapped clear around the earth like several thicknesses of blankets,

and the heat, although durable, will be found to be quite unendurable, and poor people will then thank their fortunes that they haven't very many clothes to wear and be content.

Rich people sailing o'er life's solemn main will be apt to seek some favorite port where to anchor until more pleasant weather comes—say Newport, for instance, and a great many people will live them away to the Highlands, others will leave the hot desert of the cities for the Catskills, while others for a cooler atmosphere will seek a foreign climb, and in the language of the poet, "None but the rich can pay the fare."

The cattle upon a thousand hills will earn their provender by the sweat of their brows.

The musketoes are having their bills extra lengthened, and people will find it of great convenience to go into jail and sleep behind iron bars.

Mechanics, during the coming heated term, will find it to their advantage to turn out a good deal of work—that is, turn it out of the shop.

A genius will get suddenly rich who will invent some kind of pinchers that will extract the heat from the weather.

There will be an eclipse of the moon on the night of August first, caused by the sun rolling over and getting between the earth and the moon; but this phenomenon will only be observed by those who witness it.

Hanging over gates at ten o'clock will be one of the principal recreations of young people of evenings.

You will be fully able to tell that the weather is hot without looking at the thermometers, and the best plan would be to stay indoors and take it cool—with ice in it.

I only mention it as a suggestion that it would be a fine thing to wear birds attached to your ears instead of earrings, to flutter and fan you with their wings; the bird's size to be regulated to the size of the ear. I know some men who would require condors of the largest persuasion!

Broadcloth coats will be made long this season, with velvet collar and loop attached to hang it up on a hook until the season is well over.

Corns will flourish this season on the feet of those who can afford to wear them.

But ah, don't forget the sun is one of the most bracing things in the world upon the construction of man. Impress this fact upon your hired men and your boys.

Hats will chiefly be worn in the hand, and linen coats will be worn on the arm as they will be more comfortable there.

Pedestrians will walk with as little baggage as possible, and therefore will not be loaded down with money.

If your wife's aunt lives with you the mercury is likely to go still higher up, as she will make it warm for you.

All contracts made contrary to your will and consent will be dissolved by the warm weather.

You can begin to look out for terrific storms about your house in case you refuse to get your wife a bonnet worth a few little dollars more than Mrs. Jinks'.

If you owe anything this summer will be a splendid time to begin to think of paying it in the course of another year or two.

Keep honest if you have to pack yourself in ice.

Yours, summerily,
WASHINGTON WHITEHORSE.

Woman's World.

HOT WEATHER COSTUMES.

In these piping hot days it is a great comfort to know that really seasonable goods are in high fashion. Madras cambrics and Oxford gingham, cotton fabrics, are worn for morning shopping in the city, and will be seen at all the summer resorts in lieu of the batistes, linens, and Victoria lawns of last year. They have a certain attractiveness that will make them the accepted country dress for the season.

The fabric is a soft-finished, glossy percale, scarcely to be distinguished from silk. The costumes—partly plain, partly plaid—are made as elaborately as though they were rich silks. "Medieval blue" (which is not navy nor "madonna blue," but black blue) is the choice for these dresses, and is plaided with ecru or barred with red. The Pompadour colors—pale blue and rose-pink—are also combined in dainty Madras toiles. Both brunettes and blondes wear medieval blue; the paler shades for blondes only.

The "Summer silks" now considered most stylish have black and white checks; when color is desired the basket-weave or twilled Louisiana silks are chosen. The modest black and white check may form the entire dress, with the finger and wrist water in a shallow dish, and the finger and wrist water in a shallow dish, and the finger and wrist water in a shallow dish, and the finger and wrist water in a shallow dish.

Dark blue grenadine or Mexicaine is very stylish this summer, and is now thought especially becoming to brunettes; and why not, since cardinal red is claimed by blondes? Figured grenadines, striped, plaid, or checked, are more worn than the neat and substantial iron Hernani. Shirring, platings, fringe, and lace, not one alone, but all, appear on one dress for trimming. White duchesse, or else old English thread lace ruffs and jabots, brighten these dark dresses.

Black silk, however, is, as ever, in style with truly stylish women. One of these dresses, for church afternoon wear, is to be thus described:

The black silk, just short enough to escape the ground, has three Marguerite platings across the front, and two wider platings on the back breadths. The long tunic is shirred down the front and sides; the back is a full panier puff held by plaits; the edge is trimmed with very rich fringe. The simple shapely basque has long side-forms; rows of fine plating are down the middle of the back; close coat sleeves with Marguerite platings, as fine as crimping, falling over the hands. Sheer linen collar and cuffs hemstitched; red gold brooch and earrings; black chip bonnet trimmed with cream-colored faille and glowing carnation, and a black parasol edged with lace. Similar toilets are met on every block.

Perhaps the next stylish black dress will be relieved by a white hat, with brim pulled low over the forehead and turned up behind; its sole trimming deep blue gauze twined around the crown and wound about the neck. The large parasol is also of dark blue silk, with scalloped edge and white lining. Black lace jackets of guipure or thread, and round cardinal capes of lace and of jet, are added to make these raven suits more dressy. Small fichus of black lace are also worn in the street. A single rose fastens them at the throat.

It is the duty of the Christian to be courageous, undaunted and composed, so long as Christ is with him.

Readers and Contributors.

TO CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not fully prepaid in postage.—No MSS. preserved for future orders.—Unavailable MSS. promptly returned only where stamps accompany the inclosure, for such return.—No correspondence of any nature is permissible in a package mailed as a "Book MSS." MSS. which are imperfect are not used or wanted. In all cases our choice rests first upon merit or fitness; second, upon excellence of MS. as "copy"; third, length. Of two MSS. of equal merit we always prefer the shorter.—Never write on both sides of a sheet. Use Commercial Note paper as most convenient to edit and compositor, tearing off each page as it is written, and carefully giving it its full or page number.—A rejection by no means implies a want of merit. Many MSS. unavailable to us are well worthy of use.—All experienced and popular writers will find us ever ready to give their offerings early attention.—Correspondents must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases.

We use "Master of Holy-wildie;" "Two Sides to a Story;" "Weighed and Found Wanting;" "Was it Unmannerly?" "Eklinda's Hate;" "The Token of Regard;" "The Chief's Signet;" "A Broken Trust;" "Major Morry's Antagonist;" "Under the Trees."

The following contributions we must decline: "Crazy Liddy;" "Poor Little Sammy;" "The Farmer's Song;" "Dreary Blow the North Wind;" "A Spirit in the Camp;" "Roméo in June;" "Tidy Jim;" "The Cow-herders;" "A Boy in Rio;" "A Californian Romance;" "Speak and be Heard."

ESPION. We do not care to see the MS. referred to.

MISS P. S. H. Do not send your address to a stranger.

NORMAN D. Board is never reasonable at fashion resorts. Don't go to Saratoga or Newport.

OLD ROPES. Cotton stock is now so cheap that basswood paper is but little used.

SIMON WARD. Eben Ward, of Detroit, inherited a very large fortune from his father, E. B. Ward—once a noted steamboat owner.

DINNY. Good thermometers can be had for less than a dollar, but a barometer costs four times as much. Get both.

J. H. SMITH, of Slatting, Pa., has a complete file of the SATURDAY JOURNAL from No. 36 to the present time, well preserved, which he will sell at a very reasonable price.

MARY E. A minister has no power to marry because he is a minister. He must first be licensed to solemnize marriages. If he has no license a marriage by him would be null and void.

K. M. M. The magazine *Old and New* has been "consolidated" with *Scribner's Monthly*—which is merely the polite way of saying it failed to live.

JACOB ENG. The funny man of the *Detroit Free Press* is Charles B. Lewis. "M. Quail" is a "Buckeye Boy," and is now about 33 years old. He writes for the SATURDAY JOURNAL.

O. W. D. Mayne Reid's "H. Adress Heroman" commenced in No. 365 of the SATURDAY JOURNAL.

Oil Coomes' "One-Armed Air" in No. 199. We can only supply numbers since No. 156.

UNCLE SAM. Address the two poets in care of Osgood & Co., Boston.

Grant at Washington, from whence all their letters are forwarded to their summer residences.

DOZY. "Go for" your potatoes with a hand-dredge or powder-box, filled with plaster of Paris, forty parts to one part of Paris green. One or two dredgings will rid the vines wholly of the bugs.

EX. Labor rates have been reduced very generally, but printers and stereotypers yet obtain the old rates. How long it will be so remains to be determined. That their rates are too high every publisher must admit.

SPECIMEN BRICK. A ton of silver ore which yields \$100 to the ton was sold at the Newburyport, Mass., except that the ore is of poor quality. The same is true of the North Carolina ores.

DISCOVERY. The first record of the horses you name is as follows (best mile time): Camors, (dead), 2:10½—Membrino Gift, 2:20—Smuggler, 2:20—Pleety Goldust, 2:30—Henry, 2:20½—Sensation, 2:30½—Mountain Boy, 2:20½—Rolla, 2:21—Rolla Goldust, (saddle), 2:21—Castle Boy, 2:21—Hopeful, 2:21—Jay Gould, 2:21½—Kansas Chief, 2:21½—George Wilkes, 2:22.

CHARLES ROVER. The play "Around the World" comes to us from London, where it has had a long run. It is not, we believe, Jules Verne's story dramatized. The play is by Mr. H. Shaughraun, has nothing to do with it. His Shaughraun has been the great hit of the year.

HOBBY N. The cubic contents of any box is found by this simple rule: Find the length, breadth and depth, multiply them together; add the square of the length, and divide the product by 144; the result will be the number of bushels, and the fractional remainder, if any, will be reduced to pecks and quarts.

LONDON BOY. The crown of Great Britain is State property, and does not belong to the queen. Her crown (kept in the Tower for safety) was constructed in 1838 with jewels taken from old crowns and others furnished by command of the queen. It contains 4 large pear-shaped pearls, 273 small pearls, 17 table diamonds, 2,341 rose diamonds, 1,363 brilliant diamonds, 5 rubies, 11 emeralds and 17 sapphires.

AMASA BROWN. We know nothing about the "bitters" referred to, but believe them to be a most expensive and useless concoction.

any good physician embodying needed principles—sarsaparilla, calaisaya and snakeroot—and have for fifty cents what you will find to obtain for five dollars in any "patent" bitters.

REBECCA CLARK, Jackson, Fla., writes: "Can you tell me how to make skeleton leashes, and what ones are best to prepare?" Do not use any of resinous nature, or containing much turpentine, and use, if possible, and divide the product by 144; the result will be the number of bushels, and the fractional remainder, if any, will be reduced to pecks and quarts.

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THE CITY ON THE HILL.

BY EBBE E. REKFOR.

I know the strangest city—
A silent, peaceful city,
A beautiful white city
Upon a sunny hill;
Where daisies fair are growing,
While summer winds are blowing
Upon the earth's green bosom,
Among the streets so still.

The streets are long and narrow,
And the brown thrush and the sparrow
Their little nests have built;
Among the flower-flecked grass.
You will hear the song of linnet,
And the robin's carol in it,
Whenever this strange city
Your footsteps chance to pass.

The houses in this city,
This still and peaceful city,
Where never human pity
The dwellers ask nor need,
Are long and low, and over
Each roof the grasses cover,
That no one may discover
The haunts where sparrows breed.

There are no sounds of sorrow,
No longings for to-morrow,
No pain to bear and borrow
Within its silent streets.
But all is peaceful over
The green grass and the clover,
As days go drifting onward
Above its calm retreats.

Thither, dear one, grown weary
Of treading pathways dreary—
Grown, oh, so tired and weary!
Have often turned for rest.
And in that fair white city,
That beautiful, strange city,
No thought of pain nor pity
Can touch the dweller's breast.

Oh, peace, so sweet and tender,
So wrapped about with splendor
Or rest, which you can render
About each low-laid head;
Sometime my feet shall enter
The gates of your white city,
And I shall claim a dwelling
Among your peaceful dead.

A Heart Unveiled.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

I ASK myself two questions as I sit down to write some of the episodes of my life—my strange, hungry, never-satisfied heart-life. I wonder, inquiringly, if ever a woman before me dare open her inmost life as I have deliberately decided to do, not knowing or caring who shall read it, so that he never sees it—and I wonder, with a sad, shuddering pity, as much for myself as for the possible sufferer, whether the woman ever lived, or ever will live, who has endured, or will be called upon to endure, what I have!

I was not a girl—foolish, romantic, ready to fall in love with every passing face or flattering voice—but a woman of twenty-five, with tastes, views and opinions of my own, when I first met him.

I cannot endure to write his name; it kills me—and yet, I will. I will write it, as I have written it hundreds of times; what matters one more pang to me?

His name? I worshiped even his name—was so beautiful to me; so characteristic, so unlike any other name: "Grayson Fairfax"—there, I have written it for the first time in four years, while every instant of those weary years it has been sounding through my memory like the echo of some sweet strain of melody.

From the moment I first saw him—at a conversation on one of Mrs. Laurel's Tuesday evenings—I knew he was my hero, my ideal—yes, something even more perfect than my most ardent longings. It seemed as if Nature had ordained herself when she gave Grayson Fairfax to the world; such faultless personal beauty, such perfect qualities of mind, such nobility of character, such grandness of regal mien.

Do you wonder I was a worshiper at the shrine where many a woman bowed? I, with my unscathed heart, with my mature judgment, with my passionate yearning toward all the very attributes he possessed? And—this was, and is, and always will be a mystery—he loved me. It was so strange, so blissful, so solemn, to think he, my god among men, could find anything in me to call forth all the wealth of his soul's love. I have sat for hours trying to solve that question; and to-night, as I sit here, writing these memories, I laugh to think how I used to bow down and worship him.

Well—it ended; and after an engagement of five months, when an eternity of happiness was crowded into the narrow, golden space, there came a misunderstanding, and a parting, and—my God! such a desolation to me.

It seemed then—even now, after four years it is just as keen—that there was nothing else; no time, or space, or life, or pleasure; only infinity of horror, only anguished blankness. Nothing to do but live on a memory while waiting to die and be away from it all.

You think I was romantic? You think he wasn't worth it? Well—then I really thought there might be a sweetness in the sacrifice in some far-off, most impossible time; but, when the worst blow of all came; when I knew Grayson Fairfax had either forgotten or never had forgiven me my part of our misery; when I knew, of a horrid certainty, that he called some other woman wife—if you can, you women who don't believe in love that governs heart, soul, mind, strength, will, if you can, imagine my agony.

I can't tell it here—there are no words in my mind that begin to express how I felt when I, in a perfect delirium of madness, made myself realize how he, my own lover, had kissed another woman's lips as he had kissed mine, when our hearts met in one pulsing throb of bliss; how he had caressed another than me, to whom he had sworn eternal fealty; how he had touched her hair, and looked in her eyes with that look of his that had made me forget there was a heaven or a hell, or ought else in all the universe besides myself and him.

I had been so true—even all the while I never had seen him; I had treasured him so, and kept him throned the same; and the while I was pining and moaning he—he had been on with the new love, as if I had never been!

It was madness, I verily believe, that possessed me, those first days of pitiful knowledge—days when I walked my bedroom floor night after night, sleepless and feverish, with equal agonies tearing at head and heart. But, I have lived to tell it—live to tell his faithlessness, and my sorrow; though why I have done so is a mystery to me. No one cares, not knowing how I loved him—ay, love him still. God help me!

Only forty-eight hours since I laid down my pen. Only forty-eight hours, and all the world is changed to me—me, who daring to pray to God to help me for hopeless, wicked love of Grayson Fairfax—am trembling now, as I write it down, for wild, mad happiness that is not happiness either.

Can you guess? can you believe it? He

will be under this very roof before this time to-morrow night!

I did not believe Mrs. Ellenwood when she made the announcement at breakfast, from a letter from Grayson's wife—oh! that stabs me when I write it. Grayson's wife! the woman he loved better than me—no! never! I will never admit it, if he did marry her, if he did forget me.

I shall see her—much of her, for she is one of Mrs. Ellenwood's usual country boarders; has been here for several seasons, and Mrs. Ellenwood is preparing to make a great deal of her.

She is pretty, Mrs. Ellenwood says—small, slight, graceful, brunette. But then Mrs. Ellenwood thinks everybody pretty—as if she is any judge. Yet she must be pretty, or Grayson Fairfax would not have married her.

And her name. Until this morning there was no sweeter name to me among the many tender appellations of women than Miriam; I always have liked it extravagantly—till now. I hate it, loathe it—for her name is Miriam. I shiver with homesick pain when I try to imagine how he says it; as I recall how he used to say to me—"Grace, darling!"

It is frightful—this wild, throbbing sensation I have from head to foot. It is not gladness; what will it avail that I see him? He is not mine. It is not regretful sorrow that we are fated to meet, because the very thought of being disappointed sets me wild.

I am not afraid to see him, not ashamed that I may compare unfavorably with his wife; what is this faint, sick pain? Is it heart, or heart, or the woe of me?

I had to lay down my pen suddenly last night; my brains seemed turned to molten fire. And now, this morning, there is another shock.

Mrs. Ellenwood says there is the sweetest little girl—his child, and that Miriam's!

It seems to me this is worse than all. To see this babe—to hear it lisping mamma to any other woman than to me—oh, why did cursed Fate give me such capacity for suffering? What have I ever done, that this deathless agony never leaves me? what shall I do—what shall I do to escape it?

Yes, there is death—thank God for that! Forgetfulness, oblivion for time; but for Eternity—what? Am I blasphemous when I say of heaven would not be heaven to me without Grayson Fairfax? And the deepest, darkest recesses of Hades would be paradise—oh! how wickedly I am thinking! My brain surely must be turning. I wonder if people ever do go crazy because they love so madly, so hopelessly? Anything but that! anything but insanity.

Now, I shall give the day to schooling myself to meet them. I have sworn to meet them as coolly as I know he will meet me; afterward—

Hark! Listen! They're down in the drawing-room! Don't you hear a man's voice—the sweetest you ever heard? Well, that's Grayson Fairfax, whom I have just seen; whom I have just heard speak and smile!

I say! It is Mr. Fairfax, the husband of that delicate, lily-like woman you heard playing one of Schubert's scottisches, and the father of the blue-eyed, floating-haired baby girl the French bonne just carried off to sleep.

To think I am fool enough to leave the crowd in the drawing-room, and creep off here to my room, to write it down—as if I could write it down, now I am here!

We met—I prepared, he wholly unaware I was here. I bowed, and, like the gentleman he cannot help but be, he made no sensation, but offered me his hand, saying:

"Miss Treescott—is it possible?"

I can't understand how I did it, but I know I was as cool and as calm as if it had been Mrs. Ellenwood. I laughed, and begged an introduction to his wife, and kissed little Fay, and chatted half an hour; and then—I began to feel this unendurable, indescribable anguish creeping over me. I began to think if I was myself; if it had been four years since I saw him last; and when I caught a glance between him and Miriam, I felt such a sharp, wickedly intense desire to murder her at his feet, that I dared stay no longer.

And that reminds me—that gory murder—that Mrs. Ellenwood said Miriam was very delicate, in very precarious health. She has had several attacks of nervous prostration, and she came here purposely for rest and quiet. Suppose she should die? I wonder if—I wish she would die!

Two weeks of mingled Purgatory and Paradise, but I have lived through them—as I have lived through hundreds of others.

Little Fay is a darling. I love her in spite of myself. She is her father over again—eyes, hair and hauteur of carriage—just what I would have wanted her were she mine. She seems to like me; she will come from her mother to me any time, but I have never succeeded in alluring her from her father, who worships her. To-day, when Miriam was lying on the lounge, as usual in the dusk, and Fay was nestling in my lap, there came the wildest, most incomprehensible idea into my head, yes, it took possession of me, heart, soul, brain, and body; and as I wrote this minute, in the lonely starlight midnight, the very scratch of my pen over the paper echoes the same strange suggestion.

What if it should, dreadful shock to Miriam's diseased nerves should kill her? Would anybody be blamed?

What if the cause of the shock were not accidental?

Would anybody suspect? and what if I was the foundation of the cause? Would they dream of convicting me with the result? I am terribly excited. I cannot write another line to-night.

Ten days later.

I will do it! It makes me grit my teeth to see how he loves her. It makes my blood hiss, to picture how he will love me when she is out of the way, and I'll do it—this very day. I've made my arrangements and I am going to write them down here, so if I forget, I can consult my notes. For I am very forgetful lately—and absent-minded. This is what I shall do. Isn't it a grand, glorious idea, and because it is sure to result as I intend, am I to blame because her nerves are weak?

So I shall get Cerise—she's the bonne—to let me take Fay for a walk; and then, just at dusk I shall come home alone, perfectly surprised that the child is not there before me, as I permitted little Annie Fagan to bring her home two hours before, while I walked on further than I thought the child should walk, and I shall arrange it so that Annie Fagan mistakes my order, and takes Fay home to her house, to be kept until some one comes. The child will be safe. I shall not be censured. Annie Fagan will get the blame—and Miriam, in the sudden horror, the awful suspense, is sure to have an attack that has been warded off for six months,

but that her physician warned her, would, in all human probability, prove fatal. Isn't it grand! and won't Grayson bless me for it some day, when I am his wife?

My brain is fairly leaping with delight. I never, in all my life, experienced this exultant elation, and I go straight from this last page to my self-appointed task, leaving these last words recorded—for your sake, Grayson, my darling, for your sake and mine.

The above strange MS. has come into my possession within the past few days, and it seems to me it is my duty, for Miss Grace Treescott's sake, to add a few words of explanation. It might otherwise seem incomprehensible. I had no hand at elaborating a report, or at being able to make it read like a story, so I shall simply state several facts:

First—Miss Treescott was suddenly taken violently insane last Tuesday evening. She had come in from the walk she mentions in her MS. and was strangely excited; the excitement increasing momentarily, until we were obliged to send for a physician. The result—hopeless insanity, and to-day she is an inmate of the State lunatic asylum.

As regards the horrible purpose her incipient madness proposed—God's mercy ordered it otherwise. The shock to Mrs. Fairfax's nervous system, acted contrary to all precedent—and when the next morning Annie Fagan came home with baby Fay—Miriam instantly began to mend, and is stronger than for years. I wish to say, that I am the only person who has read these papers, and now, my explanation added—and my name signed, I shall lay them away—a sad, pathetic epitaph on the tablet of Grace Treescott's departed reason.

ANNA ELLENWOOD, Cliffdale.

July 25th, 1874.

Victoria:

OR, THE HEIRESS OF CASTLE CLIFFE.

BY MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING,
AUTHOR OF "THE DARK SECRET," "AWFUL MYSTERY," "THE RIVAL BROTHERS," ETC.

CHAPTER XIX.

BACK AGAIN.

ONCE more the cathedral-bells were cracking their bronzen throats ringing out peals of joy; once more there were triumphal arches all along High street to the very gates of Castle Cliffe, with "Welcome, Rose of Sussex!" "Long life and happiness to the heiress of Castle Cliffe!" and a score of other flaming mottoes; once more the charity-children turned out to strew the road with flowers; once more the town was assembled in gala attire; once more there were to be public feasting and rejoicing, and beer and beef for every "chawbacon" in Sussex, *ad libitum*. That day month there was shooting for the May Queen—now there was shooting for a far greater personage, no less than the heiress of Castle Cliffe.

In the sunshine of a glorious June afternoon, under the arches of evergreen, and over the flower-strewn road, came the triumphal chariot of the heiress, otherwise a grand barouche, drawn by four handsome grays in silver-plated harness, with out-riders. In this barouche sat the colonel and Miss Shirley, Lady Agnes and Leicester Cliffe. The young lady was kept smiling; for, as the crowd saw the bright, smiling face, they hurried again and again, with much the same enthusiasm as that which made the Scotch Commons shout when Mary Stuart rode among them, "God bless that sweet face!" In the next carriage came Sir Roland and Lord Lisle, Tom and Margaret Shirley, and the two that followed were filled with a crowd of ladies and gentlemen from the city, whom Lady Agnes had brought down, though they knew it not, to be present at her granddaughter's wedding.

The great gates swung majestically back under the carved arch, emblazoned with the escutcheon of the Cliffes, to let the car of triumph in; and the lodge-keeper stood in the door of the Italian cottage, to bow to the passing princess. The flag on the domed roof, flung out its folds proudly to the breeze, and a long line of servants, many old and gray in the service of the family, stood drawn up in the hall to bid them welcome. There, too, stood Mr. Sweet, ever smiling and debonair, the sunshine seeming to glint and scintillate in his yellow hair and whiskers, in his jingling jewelry and smiling mouth, until he made one wink again to look at him. All sorts of miracles had been working in the house for the last fortnight. A whole regiment of upholsterers had been sent down from London, to set every room topsy-turvy, and the servants distracted, and to make them perfectly resplendent with damask and velvet. And now the heiress of all this wealth and splendor, fair and youthful, her eyes filling with tears, was entering, leaning on the arm of her hero of a father, stately and handsome; and some of the servants were wiping their eyes, too, and whispering how like she was to all the Cliffes generally, but particularly to the abbess, whose portrait hung in the hall above.

Marshaled by the housekeeper, everybody hurried off to their rooms to dress for dinner. Vivian went to hers (the Rose Room), where she had slept the first night she ever entered Castle Cliffe. In all the changes and preparations it had not been altered, by her own especial request; and she danced round it like the happy child she was, glad to be home again. There stood the canopy bed in the recess, guarded by the watchful angel; there was the picture over the mantel—the majestic figure, with the halo round the head, blessing little children; and there, yes, there was one change, there was another picture—a fair-haired boy, with a face beautiful as an angel; the picture that had once hung in the villa in Cliffewood, and sent to her by Sir Roland within the last fortnight, as having decidedly the best right to it. Alone as she was, her cheeks grew hot and crimson at the sight, and then she laughed to herself and kissed her finger-tips to it, and resigned herself into the hands of Jeannette, to make her pretty for dinner. And pretty she did look when it was all over; for she was too impatient to go through the house to see the changes, to waste time over her toilet. Mr. Sweet, standing in the hall talking to the housekeeper, looked at her, quite lost in admiration, as she came out in a floating amplitude of bright blue silk, low-necked and short-sleeved, according to her cool custom; her golden hair freshly curled, falling around her in an amber cloud; her blue eyes shining, her rounded cheeks flushed. Low he bent before her, with a gleam in his eyes that was half admiration, half derision. Now, Vivian did not like Mr. Sweet, and Mr. Sweet was not fond of Vivian. The young lady had an unwinning way of looking out of her great blue eyes, and discerning tinsel from gold, despite its pitiful glistening, with much of her grandmother's eagle glance; and Mr. Sweet always shrunk a little under those fearless, guileless eyes.

"He is too sweet to be wholesome, Tom," she had said once to her cousin. "No man that always smiles and never frowns, is anything but a hypocrite."

But to-day she was at peace with the world and all therein, and she bent her pretty head and shimmering curls till they flashed back the sunlight, and then danced down the hall like an incarnate sunbeam herself.

It was well Vivian knew the old house by heart, or she certainly would have got lost in the labyrinth of halls, and corridors, and passages, changed as they were now. A certain suite of oak rooms in the Agnes Tower, with windows facing the east—she liked a sunny eastern prospect—had been, by the orders of Lady Agnes, fitted up ostensibly for Miss Shirley; in reality, for Mr. and Mrs. Cliffe. There was a boudoir whose very carpet was a miracle in itself—violet and forget-me-nots so natural that you scarcely dared step on them, on a groundwork of purest white, like flowers blooming in a sward-bank. There were window curtains of blue satin, with silver embroidery, under white lace; walls paneled in azure satin and hung with exquisite pictures, each of which had cost, in Italy and Germany, a small fortune in itself. There was a wonderful cabinet of ebony and gold, vases half as tall as herself, a ceiling where silver stars shone on a blue ground and chairs of some white wood, that looked like ivory, cushioned in blue satin. There was a rosewood piano in one corner, with the music she liked on the rack beside it. There were carved swing-shelves of the same white wood, with all her favorite authors, gayly bound, thereon, from William Shakespeare to Charles Dickens. There were hot-house flowers on the table, and sweet-scented canaries, singing in silver-gilt cages; and a portrait of herself, resplendent in the dress she had worn to Court, smiling serenely down on all.

"Dear, dear grandmamma!" she murmured.

"How good, how kind, how generous she is!" The next of the suite was an oratory—a queer room, fitted up as a curiosity, to be shown to visitors. The floor was of black and white marble, inlaid with polished wood of different colors in fanciful mosaic, and slippery as ice. The walls were hung with faded silken arras, representing the adventures of Genevieve of Brabant, the work of some ancestress, whose fingers had long ago molded into dust; and standing out on brackets around the four walls was carved in ebony the Way of the Cross, representing the whole mournful journey to Calvary, from the Judgment Hall of Pilate to the sepulcher wherein no man had ever lain before. There was a great altar carved in oak, with a full length statue of the Madonna crushing the head of the Serpent, and opposite was another of Eve being tempted by the same enemy of mankind.

A dingy painting of the Last Supper served for an altar-piece; before it was a prie-dieu, or kneel-bench, carved also in ebony, with a great illuminated Roman missal thereon. A gothic window of stained glass, with the figures of the Twelve Apostles gorgeously painted, admitted the afternoon sunshine in rainbow hues. Everything in this room, a visitor would think, was at least a century old. Nothing of the kind; Lady Agnes had had them all brought from Germany for the occasion. Vivian looked round her in delight, and having knelt for a moment to murmur a prayer before the grand altar, passed on to the next—the dressing-room.

It was a bath-room as well as a dressing-room; the walls were incrustated with mirrors, reaching from floor to ceiling, with fragrant cedar closets on either hand. On one of the tables lay a dressing-case of mother-of-pearl, and the carpet and hangings, were of dark crimson. The next was the bed-chamber, a superb room, with four large windows draped in green velvet, cut in antique points, and lined with white satin, overlooking an extensive prospect of terraces and shrubbery, and plantations and avenues. Green and white were the prevailing tints throughout the room; the bed-hangings were of those shades; the easy chairs and lounges were upholstered in green velvet, and the carpet looked like green moss with wreaths of white roses laid on it. And then came another dressing-room, whose shades were amber and jet, which made Vivian open her eyes; and beyond it there was a little study, with rosewood shelves round three sides of the room, well filled with books, and there was a gentleman's Turkish dressing-gown of bright scarlet and yellow, lying over the back of an arm-chair; and on the table was a long Turkish pipe, with an amber mouth-piece, and beside a crimson fez. The other side of the room seemed to be a small armory, for there were swords and daggers of Damascus steel, whose keen blue glitter made her flesh creep; and pistols and revolvers, at sight of which she recoiled precipitately to the other end of the room.

"Grandmamma is determined that I shall have a variety of dressing-rooms!" thought Vivian in horrified surprise; "but what all those horrid things are for, I cannot imagine! Does she expect me to wear that red and yellow dressing-gown and flaming cap, and smoke that dreadful long-stemmed chibouque, I wonder? I shall go and see!"

Each of those rooms had two doors, one opening on the outer hall, the other in a straight line of communication with each other. Vivian hurried on to the beautiful boudoir, and with the free, light elastic step peculiar to her, traversed the hall and corridor, the last of which was her own. The door of the lady's dressing-room was ajar, and the girl looked in.

"Grandmamma, I have been through the rooms, and they are charming! I never saw anything prettier in my life!"

Lady Agnes was sitting listlessly, with her eyes closed and her hands folded, before a great Psyche mirror, under the hands of her maid. At the sound of the voice, she opened her eyes and looked round in surprise.

"My dear child, is this really you? How is it possible you are dressed already?"

Miss Shirley pulled out a watch about the size of a penny-piece, set with a blazing circle of diamonds, and consulted it with precision.

"I was dressed just twenty minutes ago, grandmamma!"

"What an absurd toilet you must have made, then! Come in and let me look at you!"

Vivian came in and made a respectful little housemaid's courtesy.

"Oh, my lady! don't scold, if you please! I was dying to see the rooms; and how could I think of my toilet the very first hour I got home?"

"Well, you are tolerable," said Lady Agnes, leaning over with a critical eye, "but too plain, child; simplicity is very nice in young girls, but some ornament—a flower, a few pearls, everything in keeping, remember."

(She herself was blazing in jewels.) "And you have rather too much of a milkmaid flush on your cheeks; but still you are very well. Where did you say you had been?"

"To see the oak rooms in the Agnes Tower. They are lovely, grandmamma, especially that dear, delightful oratory, which is prettier even than"—Vivian paused suddenly, and Lady

Agnes, with a little, malicious laugh, finished the sentence:

"Then the famous oratoire in the Chateau St. Hilary, which you have described so often, and of which this is a copy. Well, my dear, as you declined being mistress of that, I determined you should possess a prettier one; and so you really like it?"

"Of course; who could do otherwise! But, grandmamma, I don't understand why I'm to use two dressing-rooms, and what all those shocking swords and pistols are for?"

"Dear child!" said Lady Agnes, in German, that Mademoiselle Hortense, the maid, might not understand, "they are not there alone, but Mr. and Mrs. Cliffe's! The amber dressing-room and study are your husband's!"

"Oh!" said Vivian, laughing and blushing.

"After your bridal tour, you know, they will be occupied—not until then; and afterward, when you visit the Castle. And now, Victoria, there's something else I want to speak to you about—the announcement of your engagement. As I acceded to your silly entreaties in town, and did not announce it there, I think it is only proper that our guests should be informed immediately. As the marriage is to take place itself within a fortnight, the notice even now will be absurdly short."

"Oh, grandmamma—no! don't publish it yet, not on any account!"

"Victoria, I'm surprised at you! I have no patience with you? Now why, for Heaven's sake, might not the whole world know it?"

"Grandmamma, you know very well. I told you in town, why. I should feel so ashamed and so silly; and I am sure I should not be able to speak a word to monsieur, my cousin, again, until after the ceremony. And then, to think that every one in Cliffonlea, and in Lower Cliffe, and in Lisleham, and all round the country will talk about it, and my name will be bandied on every lip, high and low; and how the trousseau, and settlements, and parure will be discussed! and how the sentimental people will wonder if it was a love-match or a marriage of convenience; and how they will conjecture over there in the town what sort of an appetite I had the day before, and how many tears I will shed on being led to the altar. And then those people here—how, for the next two or three weeks, it will be the sole subject of discussion; how they will shower conscious smiles and glances at me whenever I approach, and make our united names their theme over the billiard and card tables; and tell each other what an excellent match it is; and move away, and leave us alone, if we chance by accident to come together among the rest; and I will be congratulated, and kissed, and talked at. Oh, dreadful! I should never survive it!"

All this had been poured forth with such excited vehemence, that Lady Agnes opened her light blue eyes in surprise, and Mademoiselle Hortense, without understanding a word, stared and pricked up her ears. As she stopped, with very red cheeks, and very bright eyes, Lady Agnes broke out, with energy:

"Victoria, you are nothing but a little fool!"

"Yes, grandmamma; but p-p please don't tell!"

"Now, grant me patience! Was there ever anything heard like this? Pray tell me, Miss Shirley, if you are ashamed of your coming wedding?"

"Oh, grandmamma!"

"Is it ever to be announced at all, or are our guests to know nothing of it, until the wedding morning—tell me that?"

"Oh, not so bad as that! Won't next week do?"

"This week will do better! Are you not aware that Leicester leaves to-morrow for London, to arrange about the settlements, and will not return within three or four days of the day?"

"Yes, grandmamma; and I don't want to say anything about it until he comes back."

"Victoria, tell me—do you care at all for your future husband?"

Vivian wilted suddenly down.

"I—I think so, grandmamma."

"I—I think so, grandmamma!" said her ladyship, mimicking her tone. "Oh, was there ever such another simpton on the face of the earth? Victoria, I am ashamed of you! Where are you going now?"

"To the Queen's Room. Don't be angry, grandmamma. I shall do everything you tell me in all other ways and all other matters; but, please, like a dear good grandmamma, let me have mine in this!"

It was not in human nature to resist that sweet coaxing tone, nor that smile, half gay, half deprecating, nor yet the kiss with which the grand lady's lips were bribed and sealed. Lady Agnes pushed her away, half smiling, half petulant.

"You're all the same as a great baby, Victoria, and altogether spoiled by that other great baby—your papa! Go away!"

Laughing, Victoria went, and singing to herself a merry chansonnette, danced along the old halls to the Queen's Room in the Queen's Tower. In this particular room, said the traditions of the house, Queen Elizabeth had slept; and, from that memorable time, everything had remained precisely as the great Queen had left it.

It had been the awe and admiration of Vivian's childhood—this room—and it seemed filled with ghostly rustling now as she entered, as if good Queen Bess's one silk dress still rattled stiffly against the moulded wainscoting. It was a dismally old apartment, very long, and very low-ceilinged, with great oaken beams crossing it transversely, and quartered in the center in the same wood, with the arms of Cliffe surmounted by the bloody hand. A huge bed, in which the Seven Sleepers might have reposed, with lots of room to kick about in, stood in the center of the dusty oak floor, and the daylight came dimly through two narrow, high windows, with minute diamond panes set in leaden casements, all overrun with ivy. There was a black gulf of a fire-place, wherein yule logs had blazed a Christmas tune; and there was a huge granite mantel-piece, with a little ledge ever so far up. There must have been giants in the days it was used, and Vivian kissed the cold gray stone, and read the pious legend carved on it in quaint letters:

"Mater Dei, memento me!" (Dear reader, if you've never loved wood or stone, you cannot understand Vivian.) All sorts of grotesque heads were carved on the oak panels—sylphs and satyrs, gods and goddesses heavenly and infernal; and opposite each other, one of the martyred abbesses and Queen Elizabeth. This last was a sliding panel opening with a secret spring, and leading by a subterranean passage out into the park—a secret passage by which many a crime had been concealed in days gone by, and which Vivian knew well, and had often passed through in her childhood. She had been walking round the room examining the carvings, and looking at her own pretty self in a dusty old mirror, before which the royal tigers of England had once stood combing out her red mane, when she was interrupted by a startling and mysterious way enough.

"Victoria!"

Vivian started and looked round. The voice,

soft and low, was close beside her—came actually from the carved lips of the nun in the panel.

"Victoria!"

Again from the lips of wood came the name clear and sweet. She started back and gazed with blanched cheeks and dilating eyes on the beautiful dust-stained face. Once more came the voice, vibrating clear and distinct throughout the room.

"Victoria Shirley, the hour of your downfall is at hand! For six years you have walked your way with a ring and a clatter over the heads of those whose handmaid you were born to be; but the hour comes when might shall succumb to right, and you shall be thrust out into the slime from which you have arisen! Heiress of Castle Cliffe, look to yourself, and remember that the last shall be first, and the first shall be last!"

The faint, low voice took a stern and menacing tone at the close, and then died away in impressive silence. Vivian had been standing breathless, and spell-bound, and terror-struck, with her eyes on the carved nun's face over the door. When it ceased, the spell was broken, and Vivian turned in horror to fly. Not for worlds would she have gone near it to pass through the door; so she touched the spring in the secret panel, and passed out into the opening beyond. As it closed, shutting out the last ray of light and leaving her in utter darkness, she caught a glimpse of a dark figure disappearing before her in the gloom, and she flew down along the spiral staircase—how, she scarcely ever afterward knew. At the foot was a long arched stone passage, nearly a quarter of a mile in extent, ending in a wilderness of ivy and juniper, close beside one of the laurel walks. Through it she flew, pale and breathless, pausing not until she found herself out in sunshine, with the bit singing in the branches overhead, and the pure breezes sweeping up cool and sweet from the sea. Something else was there to reassure her also—a figure walking up and down the laurel walk, and smoking furiously. It turned the instant after she emerged from the tangled wilderness of ivy, and, seeing her, took the cigar between his finger and thumb, and stared with all his might. Vivian's courage and presence of mind came back all at once.

"Does monsieur think I have dropped from the skies?" she asked, coquettishly, for, being more than half French, Mademoiselle Genevieve took to coquetry as naturally as a wasp takes to stinging.

"Mademoiselle," said Leicester Cliffe, flinging away his cigar, and coming up, "I might very easily be pardoned for mistaking you for an angel, but, in the present instance, I merely think you are a witch! Two seconds ago I was all alone; no one was visible in any direction but myself. At the end of these two seconds I turn round, and lo! there stands before me a shining vision in gold and azure, like the queen of the fairies in a moonlit ring. Will you vanish if I come any nearer?"

"You may come and see," she said, and he stood before her, looking at her in astonishment, he saw how pale she was, and the excited gleam in her serene blue eyes.

"What has happened? Has anything frightened you? Why are you looking so pale?" he asked.

She shivered, drew closer to him involuntarily, and glanced behind her with a startled face.

"Vivian, what is it? Something has gone wrong!"

"Yes; come away from here, and I will tell you."

He drew her hand within his arm, and turned down the laurel walk. It ended in a long avenue leading past the old ruin; and, as they entered, he asked again:

"Well, Vivian, what has gone wrong, and how come you to appear there so suddenly and mysteriously?"

"There is nothing mysterious about my getting there. You know the subterranean passage leading from the Queen's Tower to the park? I merely came through that."

"A pleasant notion! to come through that dark and rheumatic old vault, when you could have stepped out through the front-door with double the ease and convenience! Did you see the ghost of Queen Elizabeth on the way?"

"No, monsieur; but if you laugh at me, I shall not say another word. The mysterious part is to come."

"Oh, there is a mystery, then—that's refreshing! Let me hear it!"

"You are laughing at me!"

"By no means! Pray don't keep me in this torturing suspense!"

"Monsieur, I had been through the house looking at the improvements, and I came to the Queen's Room, to see if they had been sacrilegious enough to alter that. In one of the panels there is carved the head of a nun, the abbess who—"

"Oh, I know perfectly! Lady Edith Cliffe, who was murdered there in the old monastery—what else?"

"Monsieur, there was a voice—it seemed to come from that head—and it said things that chilled my blood to think of! I think there was no one else in the whole tower but myself; I am sure there was no one else in the room; and yet, there was that voice, which seemed to come from the carved head! Don't laugh at me, monsieur; I am telling the whole truth!"

Monsieur was not disposed to laugh—not at all. He was thinking of the Nun's Grave, and of the warning voice so mysterious and solemn. This voice was possibly the same, Vivian looked up with her earnest eyes.

"What does monsieur think of this?"

"That there is not the least reason in the world to be afraid. Mademoiselle, I, too, have heard that voice!"

"You?"

"Even so!"

"Where?"

"At the Nun's Grave!"

"Oh, Monsieur, I, too, heard it there long ago! I was a child then, and I was there alone with Barbara Black!"

"I, too, was alone with Barbara Black!" thought Leicester, but he only said: "Do not distress yourself, Miss Shirley—believe me that mysterious voice is not supernatural!"

"What, then, is it?"

"That I do not altogether know! I have a suspicion: if it prove a certainty, you will yet be able to laugh over to-day's terror. Meantime, I have something else to speak to you about, as I believe this is the only time since I have had the pleasure of seeing you, that we have ever been for five minutes utterly and completely alone together!"

Vivian turned pale, and drawing her hand suddenly from his arm, stooped to gather the daisies growing under their feet. He looked at her with a smile that had a little of sarcasm in it.

"Are you aware, Miss Shirley, we are to be married in a fortnight?"

"Yes, Vivian, with a pale face and startled eyes, looked round her for a moment, as if meditating flight; and Leicester, with an inward laugh

at her evident dread of a love-scene, took her hand and held it firmly.

"Are you sure you know we are to be married, Vivian?"

"Yes, monsieur!" very faintly.

"You know, too, that I leave to-morrow for London, to arrange the final settlements, and will not return till within a day or two before the wedding?"

"Yes, monsieur!"

"And though I never had an opportunity of telling you so, you know, of course, I love you?"

"Grandmamma told me so, monsieur!"

Leicester smiled outright at this; but as she was not looking, it did not matter. Without lifting her eyes, she tried to release her hand.

"Please to let me go, Monsieur Cliffe."

"You'll run away if I do."

"No; but it is time we were returning to the house—the dinner-bell will ring directly."

"One moment only! As we are to be married so soon, it strikes me I should like to know whether or not you care for me."

With her released hand Vivian was tearing mercilessly to pieces the daisies she had pulled.

She was silent so long, with face averted, that he repeated the question:

"Mademoiselle does not answer."

"If I do not answer, monsieur," she said, with infinite composure, looking straight before her, "it is because I was thinking how to say what I feel on the subject. If I marry you, I shall love you, depend on that. Your honor, or as much of it as will be in my keeping, shall be dearer to me than my own life, and your happiness will be the most sacred thing to me on earth. But as for love, such as I have read of and heard of from other girls, I know nothing of it, and if you ask me for passion, I have it not to give! I love my papa best of all on earth; next to him, and in a different way, I respect and—"

"A little tremor of the voice; 'and love you! And, monsieur, I shall be your true and faithful wife until death!'"

In speaking, they had drawn near to the Nun's Grave without noticing it. They were standing on its verge now, and one of them remembered how he had stood there last, and how different a love had been given him then.

Much as he admired the heiress of Castle Cliffe, noble and high-minded, unworthy as he felt to touch the hem of her dress, he knew that Barbara was a thousand times more to his taste.

Miss Shirley was an angel, and he was a great deal too much of the earth, earthy, not to prefer the dark, passionate daughter of his own world. He did not want to marry an angel. Had Miss Shirley been a fisherman's daughter, he would as soon have thought of falling in love with a drift of sea-foam as she. But it was too late for all such thoughts now, and he suppressed a sigh, and looked down at the fallen tree. He started to see the carved initials staring him full in the face, like reproachful ghosts, and the guilty blood came crimson to his brow. Vivian saw them, too, and was leaning on the grass, looking at them curiously.

"Do look at this, monsieur! B. B. and L. S. C. Why, those last are your initials; did you carve them?"

"I think so—yes!" he said, carelessly.

"And whose are the others?"

Leicester Cliffe did not like the idea of willfully telling a lie, but it would never do to say "Barbara Black!" so he answered, with the guileful color high in his face:

"I don't know! There is the five minutes' bell; had we not better return to the house?"

"I should think so; what will grandmamma say? I have been fully an hour rambling about the place, and I love every tree and stone in it, even that frightful, charming and romantic Queen's Room. It is like paradise, this place—is it not, monsieur?"

"Any place would be like paradise to me where you were, Vivian!"

She laughed gayly, and they walked away under the elms, and disappeared. And neither dreamed of the unseen listener who had heard every word.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 269.)

Tiger Dick:

THE CASHIER'S CRIME.

A TALE OF MAN'S HATE AND WOMAN'S FAITH.

BY PHILIP S. WARNE.

CHAPTER XVI.

A DELICATE SITUATION.

MAY POWELL went home in a very perturbed state of mind.

"What did she mean?" she kept asking herself, "by Fred's not copying papa's signature for a fraudulent purpose; and what has Cecil to do with it?"

Thinking of copied signatures, that some three weeks ago recurred to her mind, with Cecil leaping from beneath her touch, and turning upon her with such a frightened look. He certainly seemed frightened; and why should he be copying her father's signature? She had not thought of it before; but it certainly was strange. And then a vague terror seized May, an incomprehensible shiver ran through her frame.

Her father was not yet returned from the bank; but she found Mr. Carrington in the library reading a newspaper. May was privileged character with her grandfather; so she ran in, drew an ottoman and sat down at his feet, and, with an arm resting upon his knees, waited for him to give her his attention.

Mr. Carrington looked at her over his spectacles with an affectionate smile, and seeing that she had something to say laid aside his paper and spectacles, and put his hand on her sunny head with a fond touch.

"How different from the other," he mused, "and yet just as lovely. One dark, the other fair—they would have made rare sisters."

And a half-sigh passed his lips.

"Grandpa," began May, "you have not been generous toward me."

"In what respect, my daughter?" asked her relative.

"You are keeping back from me what I have a right to know with the rest of you."

There was a hurt tremor in her voice and moisture in her eyes.

"It is sometimes a kindness to those we love to leave them in ignorance," said the old man, feelingly.

"It is cruelty in this case. I know too much to long remain in the dark; the suspense, with its vague forebodings, is torture."

"How much do you know, my pet?"

"I know that you are all in trouble, and on Fred's account. I am his sister, and have a right to know what affects him so materially."

"You know nothing of the nature of the trouble?"

"Yes, I know how he was brought home three weeks ago, and what he had been doing that night."

She hid her face on his arm, with a deep flush of shame.

"You know what he had been doing? How did you learn?" asked her grandfather, in surprise.

"Never mind. It is enough that I know," she replied, evasively. Something warned her not to implicate Cecil. "But that is not all. There is something else."

Mr. Carrington hesitated in troubled thought. How could he tell her that her brother was a forger, a common thief—worst of all, the plunderer of his own father?

"Grandpa," she urged, "it cannot be kept from me always, and I have a right to know."

"My child," said the old man, gravely, "you impose upon me a cruel task. But, as you say, it would be unjust, as well as impossible, to keep you in ignorance of the sad calamity that has fallen upon us all; and I feel that it would be better for you to hear the truth from our lips than to gather it by indiscretion and in fragments, distorted by ignorance and prejudice."

With that beginning, he told her all, as gently as so melancholy a recital could be told.

May sat through it all, white and trembling, without a word, without a tear. And all the time there rung in her ears, like the utterances of some dread oracle, the words:

"Frederick Powell never made those copies of his father's signature. If he did, it was not for a fraudulent purpose. Depend upon it, Cecil Beaumont is in some way at the bottom of this!"

And one picture, like a conjuration of the same power, floated ever before her vision. It was that of a man, who leaped to his feet with a cry of terror; and then, as he recognized her, and a sickly smile played over his white face, he slid some papers into his desk—one a letter in her father's handwriting, the other a sheet with copies of the signature—and said:

"Oh! is it you, May? How you startled me. I couldn't imagine what it was."

An icy shiver ran through her frame. Cowering, shrinking, as from some dread monster whose hot breath seared and blistered her heart, May Powell stopped her ears and hid her face in her grandfather's breast. But she could not escape. It peered at her through the shadows; its mocking eyes burned into her soul from behind some half-drawn curtain; and its hollow voice echoed and re-echoed in her ears that startled cry.

The old man smoothed her golden hair, and kissed it with a father's compassion and tenderness.

"One more!" he murmured, sadly. "Ah! if we only knew how many hearts we should cause to bleed, how often would we hesitate before we act!"

May arose and drew herself from his arms with a shudder.

"Do not mind me, grandpapa," she said. "I went to be alone."

Out of the house, and down the garden paths to a shady nook on the river-bank, she ran, and dipped her hands in the cool water, and pressed them to her throbbing temples, and tried to think.

To one sentence of Mr. Carrington's she clung as to an only hope: "What a sad and sorry state of affairs!"

Throughout all this painful affair, Mr. Beaumont had conducted himself with the consideration and delicacy of a true friend and perfect gentleman.

She repeated it over and over again to herself; she pleadedly held it up before the demon that haunted her; and suddenly she evolved from it a thought that caused her to utter an exclamation of surprise, and then stand trembling, breathless, striving to keep the idea before her mind.

"He could not!" she suddenly exclaimed aloud. "He is Fred's friend; he loves me. There is nothing to gain. There is no motive!"

"But then came that startled cry, as if halloed within her very brain, followed by the single word, 'Why?' Reeling, as from a blow, she sunk to the ground, her head bowed in her lap, her mind again in a whirl."

Cecil Beaumont was just preparing to leave the bank when a note was placed in his hand. Opening it, he read:

"Come to me at the Honeysuckle Bower to-night. May."

"Humph!" he muttered, turning it over and examining it. "What does this mean? If I am to meet her at the bower, it is evident that I am not to meet her at the house. But why? And why is it not addressed?"

As the above is all that there was on the sheet, and the envelope bore the simple superscription: "Mr. Cecil Beaumont," he seemed little likely to get any enlightenment from external evidences; and thrusting it into his pocket, he went to supper.

The more he thought it over, the more there seemed something unusual about it; and he showed near the bower, just as the twilight was deepening, with a pretty lively curiosity, not untinted with vague misgivings. He found May in waiting, and immediately stepped to her side and took her hand.

"May, my love," he said, "this is a sad meeting for you and me."

He would have put his arm about her waist, but she turned away, and said, hastily: "Wait a moment, Mr. Beaumont!"

"Mr. Beaumont!" he repeated, in reproachful amazement.

She was shaken by a storm of emotion. She covered her averted face with the hand that was free, and struggled hard with her feelings.

"What, May, what is the matter with you? What does this mean? Come, come, my darling, what has happened to you?"

And again he would have encircled her with his arm; but she sprang away with a sobbing cry.

"Wait! wait! I wish to ask you some questions."

He stopped. His fingers relaxed and let her hand slip from his grasp. Then he stood looking at her in silent reproach and surprise.

At that, a great wave of love and remorse swept over every consideration before it; and she threw herself into his arms, weeping hysterically.

"Oh, Cecil! forgive me, but why—why were you copying papa's signature that day three weeks ago? I have told nobody; but what did you do with the paper?"

He took her arms from about his neck; then sunk down into the rustic seat from very weakness, and covered his face with his hands, chilled to the soul with icy terror.

"Cecil! Cecil! you do not answer me!" she cried, her face deathly pale, her eyes dilating with a nameless horror.

Cecil Beaumont saw the naked sword above him, suspended by a single thread. A breath, a whisper, and he would be annihilated! He struggled to throw off the incubus that bound his limbs. He could not move. He strove to speak. Terror choked his tongue.

"Speak! speak!" she aspirated, in a husky whisper. "Are you guilty?"

Guilty!

The wind pierced his soul like a trenchant sword. It brought before his vision a restless sea of upturned faces, with surprise and horror expressed in some, in some malicious satisfaction, and cold condemnation and hatred in all; himself the cynosure of all eyes, and over opposite the judge, pronouncing the sentence that doomed him to chains. Then came a cry in approbation of the just decree—a cry of triumph and scorn that chilled him to the soul. But, amid the din of voices, the words, "I have told nobody" recurred to his mind; and clutching at the hope that lay in them, he chained his terror beneath an iron will, and struggling back to self-possession, said:

"Yes, I am guilty!"

An indescribable cry of amazement and horror issued from her lips, and she sprang back, cowering among the shadows.

"But not in that way!—not in that way, I swear to you, May!" he cried, starting to his feet. Do you believe me capable of dealing him such a blow?—him, your brother! Do you believe that I could so crush you, through him? Oh, how little you know of my love for you!"

"I do not! I do not!" she cried, again throwing herself into his arms. "Oh, forgive me, Cecil, if I have wronged you by a thought."

Gently he again drew her arms from about his neck.

"Wait," he said. "You must hear all; and then, if you can forgive me—if you can still love me—"

"I do forgive you; I do love you. I know that you have not sinned."

"Wait, May, I have sinned. I humble myself before you, and confess all. But this is no place for explanation. Let us take a boat and go out on the river, where we may converse without danger of being overheard."

When they were on the water, out of ear-shot from the shore, he went on:

"I do not try to extenuate the sin of which I have been guilty. I confess it in all its enormity. The events of to-day have brought it home to me with greater force than I ever felt it before. May, like most men, I have been ambitious of acquiring wealth. But be- lieve me, when I say that it was chiefly on your account, I desired that when you came to me, I might be able to surround you with those comforts and luxuries to which you were born."

Tears ran down May's cheeks as she listened. Cecil Beaumont noted them with a grim internal smile.

"To secure this, I was tempted to engage in speculation. There was a 'corner' on grain in Chicago; and I saw ten thousand dollars slipping from my grasp, for the want of one thousand to hold it for a week or two. So my agents telegraphed me, and so I believed. Then it was that I was tempted to use money that did not belong to me. I argued that I could repay it in two or three weeks, at most, and no one would be injured. Our drafts may be signed by the cashier or president. I dared not sign it in my own name; the chances of detection were too great. Then I conceived the plan of using your father's name—of committing a deliberate forgery. I do not spare myself. That is the plain designation of my crime. While learning to imitate your father's signature you discovered me—and saved me! Yes, May, you saved me. I got to thinking about your purity and goodness, and of how unworthy of you I should be, with my life stained by crime. Then I saw that the gain of no amount of money would repay the loss of an approving conscience. That night I burned the evidences of my sin, and made a covenant with my God never to yield to a like temptation. My affairs were not so bad as at first supposed; and only about one third of the money was lost. I then saw that I had been about to burden myself with a lifelong stigma, to secure a little more than three thousand dollars."

"But my sin was punished in an unexpected way. It was when burning the evidences of my own guilt that I found the half-burnt papers which condemned your brother. I did not know who had written them at the time; but resolved to find out and warn him. May, it was my guilty conscience that held me inactive. It seemed as if, should I broach the subject, accusers would rise against me on every side. I held my peace; and ultimately found myself the instrument of convicting of the very crime of which I had so nearly been guilty, the brother of the woman to whom I had dedicated my life. I cannot tell you the agony I have suffered to-day over the thought that had I spoken then, I might have saved him. May, this is what you have to forgive: the crime of which I was guilty in my heart, and the cowardice that held me back when I might have saved your brother."

May was not versed enough in business details to detect the speciousness of this story. She saw her lover humbling himself before her, confessing a crime in thought, instigated by love for herself, and taking blame to himself for not preventing a crime of which he knew nothing at the time of its commission.

"Cecil," she said, "I do not lose sight of your real fault; but I see also the noble motives that enabled you to withstand the temptation. I love you more than ever, because I know that you have been tempted and proved strong. As for the melancholy case of my brother, you did not know that evil intent lay in the copies, and are not responsible for what followed."

"And you can forgive me, May? You will still love and trust me?"

He took her hand; and as he bent over it, she felt a tear fall upon it with his kisses. Ah! an arch hypocrite was Cecil Beaumont!

"Cecil," said May, with tears of gratitude and happiness in her eyes, "our day shall be all the brighter by contrast with the night through which we have just passed."

CHAPTER XVII.

A DARK NIGHT'S WORK.

FLORENCE GOLDTHORP went home with a feeling of burning impatience for the coming of evening, when she should meet her lover. She longed to tell him what she had been doing, and believed that his own story would throw more light on what she already knew.

The sun had scarcely dipped below the horizon when she ran and stationed herself in the arbor, to await the approach of night. The moments dragged slowly; but she whiled them with bright anticipations of her lover's ultimate triumph, and of joy at her instrumentality in his reinstatement.

So the twilight deepened and night fell; but it did not bring the expected lover.

Florence went out on to the garden path and listened, but not a sound rewarded her. She looked up at the slowly, silently drifting clouds, that were blotting out the stars, one by one, and a feeling of vague misgiving crept into her breast.

And still she waited; and still she came not. Urged by anxiety, she went to where the

river washed the base of the garden, and stood there in the silence and gloom, and waited for a lover that did not come. She strained her eyes, and saw nothing but shadows. She listened, and heard only the rippling water and the breathing wind.

A puff of wind came down the stream, fretting its surface into wavelets, and touching her cheek with a sudden chill. It was the precursor of the rising storm.

The chill crept into her spirits, and to her excited fancy seemed like a breath from the grave; while the wind in the tree-tops resolved itself into piteous sighs, and (its waves breaking on the shore) the river seemed to sob, as it flowed along.

Panting and pale with apprehension, she hastened from the desolate spot, and, with her heart in her mouth, came across the garden-er.

"Stebbins," she asked, "didn't some one pass the house on foot a little while ago—did you notice?"

"Not that I knows on, Miss Florence," replied the man. "I hain't seen nobody pass a-foot, barrin' and exceptin' young Meester Powell, who made the gate jest afore you come home, and then cut 'cross lots toward Dead Man's Bluff."

"But you heard no one just a few minutes ago—since dark?" pursued Florence, resorting to a woman's subterfuge, to cover the fact of her having sought just the information his words had given.

"No, ma'am—nobody," replied the man, innocently.

And, with a remark about the approaching storm, she passed on to the house.

It came with the incessant gleam of lightning, deafening crash of thunder, and wild fury of wind and rain peculiar to the Western prairie country. And Florence Goldthorp started from her sleep and sat upright in bed, with blanched face and cold hands, listening for a repetition of the despairing cry that had broken so vividly upon her dreams.

"And he did not return to his boarding-place."

"No, he did not sleep there, nor at the bank."

"Papa, I was at the Honey-suckle Bower as he passed, and he stopped and talked with me a while."

Mr. Powell looked up, and saw his daughter pale as death, and in her eyes the awakening of an awful fear.

"Why, May—why, my daughter?" he said, taking her cold hands in his, "do not be frightened. It may be nothing after all. When did he leave you, and which way did he go?"

"Papa, it was after dark when he went away, and he rowed toward Dead Man's Bluff."

The ill-omened name, as well as her looks and tones, struck a chill of sympathetic dread to her father's heart.

"This must be communicated to the police," he said; and rising, he called Charley Brewster into his private room.

The heart of the secret lover was thrilled by the white face of her who inspired his passion; and to afford her what little assurance was possible, he said:

"Mr. Powell, I will attend to this matter myself, and bring you the earliest tidings."

May gave him a gratified look, and then he was gone.

Accompanied by the chief of police and the little detective, he put out on the river and rowed to Dead Man's Bluff. Something wedged in among the stones caught the ferret eyes of the detective, and he said to his superior:

"Mr. Prescott, there seems to be something worth looking into."

The boat was directed to the shore; and as its prow grated in the gravel, Charley Brewster leaped out and lifted what proved to be a hat, battered by the waves and foul with sand and foam and clay-dyed water. With an awful solemnity upon him, as if he stood in the presence of the dead, he said:

"It is Cecil's—Mr. Beaumont's!"

Mr. Smith, the detective, silently examined it, and then passed it to his superior.

"He may have been caught in the storm and capsized," suggested the chief of police.

"But the boat?" said Charley.

"That would be carried down the river and swept into the Mississippi."

"This is scarcely conclusive evidence of the man's death," said the detective, in a deliberate tone. "It may have blown from his head, beyond convenient recovery."

For a moment, Charley breathed more freely; but then he suggested:

"His disappearance?"

"True. Taken in connection with that, I admit its force as subsidiary evidence. But it is improbable that a skull should be capsize in so narrow a stream as this, merely by the force of a storm. Let us examine the bank for signs of his having gone ashore."

Their search was fruitless. If Cecil had left the boat, he must have done so at the landing some distance below where his hat was found. He could not have ascended the bank at any place between there and the bluff without leaving marks in the clay.

Before any further steps could be taken, a lumber-wagon was brought to a standstill in the road on the other side of the river; and a gruff hail came across the water.

"I say, strangers!"

"Our friends looked up, and saw a countryman sitting in his wagon, balancing a long oxcow on his hand."

"Well!" called back the chief of police, interrogatively.

"Be you a lookin' for a man what's missin'?"

I've jest been up to the city, an' hearded that some bank feller hain't come to chalk to-day, an' there's some that's afraid he's been drowned, or somethin' or other."

"That's the man we're looking for," replied the officer, with directness. "Can you give us any light on the subject?"

"Wal, I thort I mout as well tell yer that, ez I was a goin' home last night, I hearded some mighty tall swearin' on that there bluff. But in course you know it ain't a very uncommon thing to hear a man swear in this part o' the country; an' ez I'm a peaceable man myself, an' the storm war a comin' up right smart, I kep' right along, a-mindin' of my own business, an' didn't stop to hear what it was all about. Only when I hearded tell this afternoon that somebody was missin', the thought struck me that maybe some onlucky chap had got cracked on the head, and perhaps pitched into the drink."

The boat was rowed across the river, and the farmer rigidly cross-examined, but with no further results. Then the officers returned to follow up the new clue.

"Had he money about him?" asked Mr. Prescott of Charley, as they advanced.

"He may have had twenty or thirty dollars, or more," was the reply. "He usually carried a pretty well-filled pocketbook."

"And here are signs of a struggle!" suddenly exclaimed the sharp-eyed detective.

Sure enough, the grass was trampled over quite a space. And near the center was a dark stain, not wholly washed out by the rain, from which Charley turned away with a shudder. Near by was found a cigar, and to the knotted end still clung a bit of twisted flesh.

With this ghastly evidence of violence, they set out on their return to the city. Charley was set down at Mr. Powell's and went slowly, reluctantly, to the house. He found the banker worn and weary with the suffering through which he had passed, and at his side, May, pale with new anxiety.

"Where is he, Mr. Brewster? Have you seen him?" she asked, devouring his face with her eyes.

He cast about in his mind for some way to prepare her for the blow, and to gain time, answered simply:

"No."

But she saw the white horror that still clung to his face, and with a fascinating intensity of gaze that constrained a reply, said, in a hushed whisper:

"Is he dead?"

Her eyes held him so that he could not escape; and with his heart wrung at the cruel blow he must inflict, he stammered:

"I fear—that he has met with an accident—or violence!"

She took a step forward, groped blindly with her hands, reeled and would have fallen; but he sprang forward and caught her in his arms.

In that awful moment, while he held her lifeless form in his embrace, a thought flashed through his brain, pervading its utmost recesses like a gleam of lightning in a dark night—the thought:

"He is dead! What now stands between us?"

And he clasped her to his heart with a wild fervency—a maddening hope.

But the next moment he hated himself for the thought, and laid her on the sofa with a sort of reverent awe. Then he stepped back,

with a feeling that his very vicinity, after such a thought, were pollution.

"My child! Oh! what has happened to her?" cried the father, springing to her side.

Charley's first impulse was to tell him of her engagement to Cecil; but then he thought that if she had seen fit to withhold the knowledge of it from her father, it was her secret; and he only said:

"She is unmoved by the incidents of yesterday, and this announcement has overcome her."

Then he pulled the bell-rope, and restoratives were soon administered, and brought her back to life and suffering.

Her father hovered about her with a tenderness more than womanly; but she turned away her face, and moaned and wailed with an abandon that racked his sore heart with new anguish.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 271.)

Overland Kit:

OR,
THE IDYL OF WHITE PINE.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.

AUTHOR OF "WITCHES OF NEW YORK," "WOLF DEMON," "WHITE WITCH," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE PROOF OF GUILT.

THERE was a look of triumph in the eyes of the Judge as he looked around him and noted the effect of his words.

Mr. Remnet, well examine you again,"

Jones said.

The young man stepped forward.

"You were intimate with the murdered man?"

"Yes."

"Did you ever hear him say any thing regarding a hold that he had on a certain person?"

"Yes."

"Relate the particulars."

"I met Gains in front of the Eldorado about three weeks ago; he was under the influence of liquor, and boasted that he had plenty of money. I think he remarked that he had struck 'pay dirt.' I asked him if he had been gambling, and he replied, 'no'; but that he had discovered a secret which somebody would pay him well to keep."

"Did he say any thing to indicate to you who it was that he had a hold on?" the Judge asked.

"Yes."

All within the room leaned forward anxiously, and the supposed criminal, Jimmie, seemed as much in the dark as to what was to come as any of the rest.

"Who was the person indicated by him?"

"The prisoner at the bar, Jimmie Johnson."

A look of utter astonishment swept over Jimmie's face at these words.

"I should like to ask the witness a question," said the old lawyer, rising.

"Certainly," replied the Judge, with an air of assurance that plainly said that he did not think that the old lawyer could make much out of his son.

"Did the murdered man tell you that he possessed a secret concerning Miss Jimmie, and which she was paying him to keep silent?" the old lawyer asked.

He did not mention her name, but he gave me to understand that he meant her."

"How gave you to understand?"

"By inference."

"Ah," and the old lawyer glanced at the jury as if to call their special attention to his words. "he did not say that he possessed a secret concerning Miss Jimmie?"

"Not in those words; no."

"But you guessed that he referred to her?"

"Yes."

"What gave you that opinion?"

"Because he said that hereafter he would have the best room in the Eldorado."

"Nothing in that," interrupted the lawyer; "the Eldorado is the best house in town; a man with money would naturally say that he would have the best room in the best hotel, without reference to who kept it."

"Then, I asked him openly if the secret concerned Miss Jimmie?"

"And he answered yes?"

"No; he evaded the question; and said that I couldn't pump him even if he was drunk."

"You see the value of this evidence, gentlemen of the jury; SUP-PO-SITION!" and the lawyer laid a decided emphasis on the word.

"The moon was once 'supposed' to be of green cheese; perhaps it is, but I don't believe, gentlemen of the jury, that you believe it." Then Remnet sat down, perfectly satisfied. One thing though puzzled him; the face of Judge Jones never lost its confident expression.

"You are under oath, Mr. Remnet, and you declare to the best of your knowledge and belief that when Gains Tendall, the murdered man, said that he had a secret concerning some one, that he referred to the landlady of the Eldorado?" the Judge asked, with measured accent.

"I do," replied the young man, firmly.

"That will do."

Young Remnet retired.

"And now, gentlemen of the jury, I will present a proof to you that a secret understanding existed between the prisoner at the bar and the murdered man; that he had a hold upon her; that she was paying him to keep silent; and this proof can not be explained away by any legal craft." There was a slight touch of sarcasm in the Judge's voice.

The silence in the room that succeeded the words of the Judge was oppressive; court, spectators, all, seemed to hold their breath as though the slightest sound would disturb the solemn scene.

The Judge drew a folded paper from his pocket-book, and opened it slowly.

"This paper was found by Mr. Remnet in the trunk of the prisoner, in her room at the Eldorado. I was present, and in order that there should be no doubt, I caused Mr. Remnet to write his name on the paper."

When the Judge produced the little folded page, a burning blush swept over the face of the girl, but, as he continued on in his speech, it was succeeded by a puzzled look.

All wondered at the varying expressions upon her face, for almost every eye in the room was fixed upon her.

Old Remnet was bewildered; the calm confidence of the Judge, and the confusion of the girl astonished him.

"I will first read what is written on the paper aloud, and then submit it to your inspection," the Judge said, addressing the jury.

Jimmie leaned forward in breathless astonishment, her lips slightly apart and her eyes dilated with amazement.

"Miss JIMMIE—The money you gave me is gone, and I want more. I have come to the conclusion that you didn't pay half well enough. Why I have only to speak and you will be ruined forever. If you want me to keep my mouth shut, you must pony up. Take an early opportunity to see me, or I shall be obliged to call upon you. Spur City would be slightly astonished if it knew what I know. I don't want to make any trouble, but money I must have. You are making plenty; spare a little for me, or else I shall be obliged to enlighten the world as to who and what you really are."

A deep silence ensued. The miners looked at each other in astonishment, and the most amazed person in the room seemed to be the prisoner, Jimmie.

The Judge handed the paper to the jury.

"Examine it well, gentlemen," he said; "you see that it is addressed to the prisoner. Here is the motive for the murder. This man, Tendall, possessed a secret concerning the prisoner; to preserve that secret he was killed."

"Have you any proof that that paper was written by the murdered man?" exclaimed Remnet, catching at straws.

"Yes, your son will bear witness to that fact," the Judge answered, calmly.

Young Remnet's testimony to that effect was complete and overwhelming.

The old lawyer sat down in disgust.

"What the secret is, to preserve which this murder was committed, does not appear; possibly it is in regard to the person who found the girl the money with which she started the Eldorado?" and the Judge cast a side-glance at Dick as he spoke.

"That isn't so, Judge?" exclaimed Talbot, in a calm voice, although the purple veins in his temples were swelled out like whip-cords.

"I found the money! I'm not ashamed to own it! she's not ashamed of it! Everybody in Spur City could have known it, if it had been any of their business. That girl there is my promised wife; you're trying by false swearing to blacken her good name; you're a set of contemptible cowards to persecute a woman, and I'll bid every man engaged in this affair personally responsible for it, and you, Judge Jones, will be the first!"

The Judge turned deadly pale and half drew the revolver belted at his waist, but he paused as he caught sight of Dick's actions.

Talbot had his Derringer in the pocket of his sack-coat, ready cocked, his hand on it, and by simply raising his arm without withdrawing his hand from the pocket, he "covered" the Judge.

Jones shut his teeth tightly together.

"I call upon all good citizens to protect me from this ruffian," he said, appealingly.

"Look hyer, Talbot, you're too fast!" exclaimed Haynes. "I reckon that the gal has justice and a fair show. Go ahead, Judge; we ain't a-goin' to have any disturbance hyer."

"I kn settle it!" shouted the man-from-Red-Dog, suddenly, pushing through the line of men into the open space beyond. "That's been a feller killed; good! I'm the galoot who killed him! Go for me, now, ye cripplins! I'm ready for to take my gruel like a little man! Say, sis, jist slide out with Injun!"

To say that the speech of Dandy Jim created no little astonishment would be but the truth.

"You the murderer? Impossible!" cried the Judge.

"He was goin' up to the Gully with us at the time!" exclaimed Billy Brown.

"Who's the use of talkin'?" cried the Red-Dogite, indignantly. "I say that I'm the man that climbed him! Wot more do you want? Hadn't I ought to know? You bet! Gents, I'm yer antelope!"

But the friends of the man-from-Red-Dog seized upon him, and despite his indignant protests, pulled him back into the crowd again.

"Why can't I be hung for Injun an' the gal if I want to, you darned set of no-souled cusses, you!" he cried, in wrath.

After the tumult caused by this little series of incidents had expired, old Remnet sprang to his feet.

Gentlemen of the jury, you are trying this girl for the murder of Gains Tendall. Where's your proof that the man is dead? where is his body?" he cried.

"Spirited off by accomplices in the murder," replied the Judge. "Two witnesses swear to the man's death."

"I protest against the authority of this court. You have no legal right to try this girl!" Remnet cried, excitedly.

"Judge Lynch gives the right," replied Jones, sternly. "Gentlemen of the jury, you will retire and deliberate upon your verdict. Gentlemen of the guard, clear the room!"

And thus the trial ended. The citizens gathered in knots; ominous words were freely bandied around.

CHAPTER XL.

AN UNEXPECTED WITNESS.

THE jury were conveyed under guard to a neighboring shanty.

The Judge posted sentinels around the express office, and stationed ten of the armed men at the door. It was plain that he feared a rescue.

Jimmie remained alone in the office.

After attending to the disposition of his forces the Judge entered the office again.

"Guess he's going to try and get her to make a clean breast of it," one of the men at the door remarked, as the Judge closed it behind him.

Jimmie sat by the Judge's desk, her head resting on her arm. She looked up in astonishment when she saw who it was. Her face fully expressed her amazement.

The Judge stood silent in the center of the room for a few moments and surveyed her; his face was as rigid as though carved out of marble.

"You're in a terrible plight, Jimmie," he said, at length.

"Yes, I suppose so," she answered, slowly.

"Every thing has gone against you; the attempt of Talbot to interfere in your behalf has only made matters worse. The citizens now have made up their minds that it will not do to let the gamblers and desperadoes rule Spur City. They will make an example of you to show the rough element that they can't rule the town."

"Dick only acted like a man, that's all," replied the girl, spiritedly.

"You do not fear the verdict?"

"No; why should I? I'm innocent; I know it and Heaven above knows it, too," Jimmie said, earnestly.

"They will bring you in guilty."

"How do you know?" she asked, quickly.

"Have you told them what they ought to say?"

"No; why do you think that way?" the Judge questioned, a slight frown clouding his face. "Besides it wouldn't matter what I

might say. They will find the verdict according to the evidence, and that is terribly against you. What reason have you to think that I would do ought to harm you?"

"Because you act that way," the girl replied, simply.

"You misconstrue my acts. I am your friend—more than that, I love you. I told you so once before."

"You take a queer way to show it," Jimmie answered. "I should think that you hated rather than loved me."

"Again you are wrong. I can and will explain every thing," he said, earnestly. "I have taken the lead in this affair, so that I might control it—so that I might save you from the danger that threatens you."

"Save me?" Jimmie said, incredulously.

"Yes; you do not believe me?"

"No."

"Listen and be convinced!" he cried, quickly. "The jury will bring in a verdict of guilty. Then you will be carried to Austin and delivered into the hands of the regular officers of justice. You will be tried there and they will probably sentence you to the State Prison for life. Think what a fate that will be, to spend all the rest of your life within four stone walls, and you so young, so full of life! Is not that a fate worse than death? From that fate I come to save you."

The girl looked him steadily in the face but made no reply.

"Jimmie, I own frankly that I would rather see you dead than see you the wife of this Talbot. Events have so shaped themselves that you will have to choose between the prison-cell and me. I can and will save you if you will only let me. Surely, it is not a hard fate to become the wife of a man who loves you as I love you! Jimmie, we'll go far from here—leave this country altogether. I have plenty of money. We'll go where no one will know either of us, and in some great city forget the life that we have left behind us."

"There's one thing that I won't forget easy," replied the girl, quickly.

"And that is?"

"That I love the man that you're trying to tear me away from better than I do my own life. It's no use, Judge; to love you, I've got to be born over again."

"Oh, foolish girl! Do you prefer a prison-cell to my arms?" cried the stern man in despair.

"That's so, Judge; it's the truth and I must speak it." Little sign of weakness or indecision was there in the voice of the maiden.

"Take time to think, Jimmie; you are now shaping out your life for the next twenty years—perhaps for as long as you shall live. Do not answer hastily," the Judge said imploringly.

"Judge, I have given you my answer; I can't change it until I'm changed. Though all the world may think me guilty, yet I know that I am innocent. Dick don't think that I'm guilty, and I would rather have his good opinion than all the world besides."

Judge Jones gazed for a moment into the glowing face of the girl. He saw that words were useless.

"Well, be it so," he said, slowly; "you accept your fate. I'll wash my hands out of the whole affair."

The Judge walked slowly to the door; there he paused for a moment, irresolute.

"Jimmie, are you mad?" he cried.

"Maybe I am, but I'm happy in my madness," she replied, firmly.

"I give you one more chance—"

"It's no use, Judge; to tell you the honest truth, I'd rather marry a snake than you. You put me in mind of one every time I look at you. There's something in your face that chills my heart."

The Judge's eyes flashed in anger; a withering look he flung at the plain-speaking girl, but he uttered no words. A moment he looked upon her, and then left the room.

Jimmie once again was alone. Alone? No! for the memory of Talbot's face was in her mind; she felt his kisses upon her lips, and the electric thrill of his arm around her waist. Sometimes the thought is almost as pleasant as the reality.

The Judge paced up and down outside of the express office, a gloomy look upon his face.

"The foolish girl defies me," he muttered.

"Just as fate willed that every thing should aid me, the will of a weak girl baffles me. Obstacle after obstacle have I swept from my way. I have cut a passage through rocks to find my progress barred by a cloud. One satisfaction, though; if not for me, not for him. A poor result for so much toil and craft."

The appearance of the jury put a sudden stop to the gloomy meditations of the Judge.

A rush was instantly made by the crowd for the court-room, as the express office was now termed, but the guard at the door kept them back until the Judge and jury got in, then they allowed the rest to enter. The man-from-Red-Dog happened to be some distance up the street, endeavoring to "get on" a "side bet" as to how long the jury would be out, and, consequently, the better part of the crowd got in before him, and he only succeeded in getting a position in the doorway, much to his disgust.

He offered to give any one inside five dollars for his position, or fight him a fair stand-up fight for it, both which offers found no takers; thereupon, he expressed his opinion that Spur City was a mean sort of place, and that he could drink more whiskey than any man in it. As no one denied this, Jim was unable to negotiate a wager.

The jury resumed their places, and the crowd hushed their noise.

One could hardly have guessed from the quiet face of the girl that the dreadful charge of murder was hanging over her.

"Now, gentlemen of the jury, have you considered on your verdict?" asked the Judge.

"We have," replied Haynes, the foreman of the jury.

"Hold on! stop yer mule-team!" yelled the man-from-Red-Dog, vainly trying to force his way in at the door, a proceeding on his part which was fiercely resisted by those already inside.

"Get off my toes!" "Take your elbow out'n my side!" "Shet up!" and a number of choice expressions rose above the din.

"Stop that disturbance!" yelled the Judge in anger.

"Hold on! I've got a witness!" shouted Jim, using his head as a battering-ram, and battling his way through the crowd. The result of this was that the mass gave way, and the man-from-Red-Dog, dragging the Heathen Chinese by the collar, appeared in the little opening by the side of the jury.

"Is this your witness?" exclaimed the Judge, in anger. "His evidence can not be received."

"Why not?" cried Jim.

"He is a Chinaman!"

"No, no! No John hyer!" yelled a dozen of the crowd, imbued with all the miner prejudice against the almond-eyed Oriental.

"You can't try the gal for the murder of Gay Tendall!" shouted the Red-Dogite, defiantly.

"Why not?" questioned half a score of voices. The court was resolving into a caucus.

"Cos he ain't dead! he's alive!" yelled Jim, in triumph.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 264.)

BLOOD DISEASES.

THE FIDDLER.

BY JOE JOE, JR.

He got him a fine violin.
Of excellent finish and tone,
And straightway that fellow set in
To work with a will of his own.
He's got a most powerful arm
For music, as you will admit.
So, if I should get wrathful and storm,
This musician could make a fine hit.

He saws and he saws and he saws,
And that fiddle it squeals, squeals,
It loosens the teeth in your jaws
As over your spirit it steals.
He fiddles at morning and eve,
He fiddles at noon and at night;
He has worn out nine bows, I believe,
And my patience has left, which ain't right.

He scraped and he scraped and he scraped,
The worst scrape a man could be in.
The strings got obstreperous and snapped,
But unceasing was that violin.
My heart died within when he tuned,
And I prayed for the bridge to break down,
And the senses of every one swooned,
And his music turned everything brown.

He plays the "old days of Lang Syne"
With a great disregard of the notes,
And that instrument squeals out like nine
Thousand pigs with a million of throats;
His arm, oh, it never gets tired,
Twas made just for drawing the bow,
And nothing more could be desired
In the way of confusion below.

He plays, and he plays, and he plays,
To make such a noise must be work.
His music is shortening my days,
And he draws out the notes with a jerk.
He tortures that fiddle to death,
And it screams in its agony out.
I pray it will explode in a breath,
And that some day will bring it about.

Oh, seventy-nine thousand spirits
Of cats that inhabit that fiddle,
I hope that that instrument's near its
End, and will burst in the middle!
And when that man's sick may the yawning,
The screaming, the scratching, the crying,
The yelling, the screaming, the growling
Of all cats in the world be around him when
dying!

LEAVES

From an Actor's Life;

OR,

Recollections of Plays and Players.

BY GEO. L. AIKEN.

III.—Macready's Peculiarities—He is very strict—The Star System—Taylor, the Costumer, has his revenge—Body and Nobody—A Booth Actor—Reprimanding an Actor—The Dressing-room Stairs—Muzzy—George Jones—Boosting Macready—An Astonished Star.

MACREADY'S fastidiousness and peculiarity caused considerable feeling among the stock-actors against him. By the stock is meant the actors attached permanently to the theater for the season, and in contradistinction to the stars who only appeared occasionally, and for short periods, seldom remaining for over two weeks.

There has been a great deal written upon the subject of the star system, and it has been represented as having a pernicious effect upon the theater, the star being the only actor and the stock being composed of "sticks"—that is to say, very bad actors. This is one of those questions that admit of much argument upon both sides. Without giving an opinion on the matter, I will merely state that I have been both stock-actor and star-actor, and of the two I much prefer to be a star.

"Every man wishes to form a circle of which he may be the center," says the German Kotzebue; and William Wheatley, when I was at the Arch street Theater, Philadelphia, under his and John S. Clarke's management, rather improved the idea.

"Which side of the stage shall I take?" inquired I, at a rehearsal.
"Oh! any side, my boy; I have the center," was the reply.

This same William Wheatley—as fine an actor as ever walked the American stage—made fortune out of the "Black Crook," at the theater called Niblo's Garden, in New York city, and retired. I hope he may live long to enjoy it.

These peculiarities of Macready's, that I was speaking of, led to little annoyances on the part of the company, for actors are quick to take offense at any arrogance practiced upon them. There is no doubt that Macready came to this country with the impression that there were no actors here—that is, none who were as proficient in the art as the English histrions. Though how he, and other English stars, could entertain this idea, considering that, at this time, fully one-half of the companies in the United States were either English, or Irish, or Scotch, and the other half descendants of the same, is a puzzle to me. Like a great many of this world's prejudices it stood upon a very slight foundation.

Macready was probably the most mechanical actor that ever lived. He had reduced his stage-business to a geometrical precision. His rehearsals were very tedious, but the effect gained at night was a perfect evenness and smoothness in the performance.

If an actor committed an error he was informed by the call-boy—the prompter's assistant, whose duty it is to call the actors from the green-room when they are required for the stage—that Mr. Macready wished to see him in his dressing-room. Obeying the summons, the culprit would find Macready sitting in a chair, with the air of a judge about to pronounce sentence.

"You—ah—were very imperfect in your—ah—lines," he would say; "don't—ah—let it occur again!"

I cannot convey upon paper the peculiar sound of this "Ah" with which Macready disjoined his words. To mimic his style of speaking, as I used to do, would always convulse an audience with laughter; and yet these mannerisms, being natural to him, did not detract from the effect of his acting.

The reprimanded actor could only stammer out an excuse for his imperfection, promise amendment, and retire. To show any resentment was dangerous. Many a poor actor has lost his situation by "talking back" to a star.

The manager always sided with the star; and if that luminary said: "I will not play with that man," the offending actor was either discharged outright from the theater, or withdrawn until the star had finished his engagement.

But actors, like other men, will assert their independence at times. Taylor, the costumer, never forgave Macready for the contemptuous manner in which he ordered him to be taken away when he so generously offered to "gag" the King in Hamlet, and he was determined to get even with him for it. As he was the costumer of the theater, and his services were not necessarily required in the personation of any characters in the plays, he knew that Macready could not compel his discharge.

He waited for his opportunity and found it during a rehearsal of Lord Byron's play of "Werner." This character was one of Mac-

ready's grandest efforts, he was very particular over its action, and the rehearsals were most exact. Macready lost his patience, a not uncommon occurrence, and walked up the stage, muttering to himself, to where Taylor and a group of actors were standing.

"What's the matter, Mr. Macready?" asked Taylor, with well-affected sympathy.

"Ah—ah—they don't know—ah—they don't understand," Macready answered. "Ah! there's no discipline!"

"Pretty bad actors, ain't they?" continued Taylor.

"I—ah—did not say that, sir," returned Macready, dignifiedly.

Taylor sunk his voice to a hoarse whisper, winking hard at the group of actors, as much as to intimate that he was going to say something severely smart.

"Well, h! I wouldn't advise you to, Macready," he rejoined; "because you are the worst actor I've ever saw—except you." Macready was appalled by this free-and-easy assertion.

"Ah—oh—and who's body?" he gasped. Taylor appeared to reflect for a moment, and then said, deliberately:

"No, h! I except Nobody!"

With this he walked away, and the actors burst into a laugh. Macready smiled grimly as if he understood and appreciated the joke.

"Ah—facetious—very!" he said. "He was a booth actor in England."

This was a fact, though Taylor tried to hide the knowledge from his friends in this country. He had commenced his theatrical career as a member of a strolling company that visited towns in England during the fair-days and gave their performances in a booth or tent.

Mrs. Siddons, the great English actress, is said to have begun her dramatic life in the same humble manner.

This joke of Taylor's led to another, but of a different kind. There was a flight of stairs leading to the dressing-rooms, which were above the stage, not on a level with it. The dressing-rooms were in three sections. On the first landing was the star dressing-room—a room kept expressly for the stars, being larger and better furnished than the others. The same flight of stairs that led to this led to the stairs of the other rooms, so that the whole company used the first flight.

It was a favorite amusement among the

and stooped to secure a bit of paper which, until that moment, had escaped his eyes.

"Something about the boy, I grant!" he exclaimed, with satisfaction, rising again with the paper in his hands.

That which he had found proved to be a leaf torn from a note-book, and several holes told him that it had at one time been stuck on the needle like points of the yucca's spears. A spurt of wind had doubtless torn it loose, and sent it to the ground.

With eager eyes the hunter bent forward, and read the penciling on the stray note-book leaf.

"I have been attacked by vultures and bloodhounds," the paper read. "The Senorita Lilita Montejó has saved my life. Philip, you will find me beneath her roof."

The hunter read the message aloud, and then looked up with a prolonged whistle.

"Beneath her roof!" he repeated several times. "I know what that means, youngster."

You shot Montejó's bloodhound, and he has sworn eternal vengeance against us. The pretty eyes of the old Mexican's daughter are taking you blindly into the jaws of death, and it behooves Philip Ganelon, native of the district of Aube, to bestir himself for your safety. Attacked by bloodhounds! Whose? Why, Montejó's, of course! And saved by the Senorita Lilita! No! saved is the wrong word. Killed is the right one. *Le diable!* I will do all I can for you, boy!"

As he finished speaking, he thrust the paper into the capacious pocket of his hunter's doublet, and turned away.

"I won't follow your trail," he said, glancing over his left shoulder. "I know where the senior lives, and I'll go back to camp now."

The giant strode toward the south-east with rapidity—the sixty pounds of antelope that rested on his broad shoulders was no burden, and therefore did not hinder his pace.

An hour's walk brought him to the bank of a clear stream.

Following it for some distance, he came suddenly upon the ruins of a camp.

"*Mon Dieu!* *Le diable* has been here!" he exclaimed, letting the antelope slip from his shoulders to the ground, and then, gnashing his teeth, he walked over the scene of desolation.

The merciless hands of some marauders had

of the diabolical ceremonies—a Mexican with flashing eyes and stern face.

The infernal screw had already been applied to the throat of the youth, for his face was livid, and his eyes seemed about to burst from their sockets.

"All this for a sneaking bloodhound!" cried Philip Ganelon, and with the last word on his lips he sprang at the senior who was in his power before he could resist.

Then, drawing a revolver, the Frenchman thrust the lord of the estate to arm's limits, and covered his head with the deadly weapon.

"Loosen the screw!" he cried to the terrified man. "Tell your ruffians to do it, or, by the fairies of Aube! I'll cover the cowards with your brains!"

In trembling accents Dios Montejó gave the command, and when the rope and screws were loosened, the occupant of the chair fell forward like a dead man.

The peon slaves were too terrified to render their master assistance; the hunter's daring had paralyzed their faculties, as it were, and, through fear, they were made the slaves of his bidding.

Philip Ganelon uttered an ejaculation of horror when he saw the victim of the garrote fall to the floor, and a moment later he had thrust Montejó into the horrible chair.

The Mexican was pale as death, and cold sweat stood on his forehead.

"*La garrote!*" cried Ganelon to the tall peon who had freed the youth; but the man hesitated.

"Do it, or die!" and the revolver covered the slave's head.

Suddenly the man went to work, and the terrible screw pressed the senior's head against the upright back of the chair.

"Tighter—another thread!"

Dios Montejó's face grew terribly livid, and his almost bursting eyes looked at the mad hunter.

"You have served the boy this way," was the consolation he received. "You burned our camp because Martel was obliged to shoot one of your hounds. This is my vengeance! I guess you've killed the youngster."

The Frenchman darted a glance at the young man on the floor, and then looked at the man in the chair.

"That will do!" he cried to the execution-

"Ah, hah!" replied the member, wondering why the man wasn't looking for a woodpile.

"I could have brought a pile of recommends so high," continued the man, measuring with his hands, "but recommends don't amount to nothing."

"And have you any school in view?" asked the member.

"I want to get here in Detroit," replied the man. "What wages do you pay?"

"I'm afraid—" began the member, when the schoolmaster interrupted:

"Oh, well, I s'pose you pay going wages, and that's all I can ask for. I don't want to put on style and live high, as I'm getting a little old and ought to save money."

"As I was going to remark—" said the member, when the schoolmaster suddenly inquired:

"Do they allow licking in the schools here? If they do, I'm the man you want to dress the boys down! I've had 'em come for me by the dozen, and it would do your heart good to see the way I laid 'em! Why, when I had that school in Bay county I thought nothing of licking thirty scholars a day, besides hearing twelve classes recite! I'm an old screamer, I tell you, and there's fun in me when you get me woke up!"

"I hardly think—" commenced the member again, when the schoolmaster jumped up and said:

"Of course, you won't take me unless I pass examination, but I ain't afraid of not passing. I'd like to see a word I couldn't spell! For instance, 'Catarrh': 'C-a-t-a-r-r-h, catarrh,' 'Dandelion': 'D-a-n-d-e-l-i-o-n, dandelion,' or try me on words of four syllables. 'Lugubrious': 'L-u-g-u-b-r-i-o-u-s, lugubrious.' Oh, I can knock the socks right off'n these swell-head teachers and not half try!"

"I should like to help you," put in the member, "but—"

"Oh! you needn't think I'm behind on geography," interrupted the teacher. For instance: What is an isthmus? An isthmus is a narrow strip of land connecting two larger bodies. Is the world round or flat? Round. Why is it round? Because it is. Which is the largest river in the world? The Amazon. Which is the highest mountain? The Andes. I might go on for seventy-five days this way, and then not tell you half I know!"

"You seem to be pretty well posted in geography, but as I want to tell—"

"And on grammar, too!" exclaimed the teacher, jumping up again. What is a noun? A noun is the name of any person, place or thing. Give us an example: Man, dog, cat, goat, jack-knife, fish-hook, gate-post.

What are the principal conjunctions? And, as, both, because, for, if, that, or, nor, neither, either and so forth. Oh! I'm right on the roof of the meeting-house when you sling grammar at me!"

The member was getting desperate, and as soon as he could get in a word he said:

"I will take your name, and as soon as a vacancy—"

"And I know arithmetic from cover to cover!" exclaimed the man, standing up again.

"I can go through the tables like lightning through a haystack, and when you get to fractions and cube root I'm awful—I weigh a ton a half and still growing! Rithmetic's my favorite study, and I'll give you fifty dollars to find a man who'll saw sums in two and plane 'em down as quickly as I can!"

His speech took the wind out of him, and the member managed to say there was no vacancy at present, but he would take his name and consider his case as soon as one occurred:

"I'd like to commence right off!" replied the man, "but I'm willing to wait. Here's my name, and the minute I get your letter I'll come a-flying. If you get me you don't get much style, but you get solid old common sense and genuine education. You won't see scholars playing hide-and-coop around the wood-box or marbles on the floor—no, you won't!"

And he went down stairs.

Among the pleasant things which are in store for our Summer and Fall literary campaign is a

ROMANCE OF THE GREAT LAKES

By M. Quad, of the Detroit Free Press,

VIZ.:

The Stolen Fortune:

OR,

A LIFE AT STAKE.

A downright good serial from the noted humorist, whose pen has made more smiles than Hogarth's pencil ever provoked, is certainly one of the treats that even the most abstemious reader will welcome. We have that treat to offer, and will put it within reach, in due season.

FUNERAL DEAD BEAT.—Of all the objectionable social characters to be found in all cities, deliver us from the funeral dead-beat. The term may seem a little harsh, but is deserved. Notice the funeral of some prominent person. There the clan is present in full force. They go early and look solemn, and crowd into the parlor, taking prominent positions, and obliging the friends of the family to sit in the hall or stand up. They view the remains of the one most dear to many in the room, and conventionally remark: "How natural!" or "What a beautiful corpse!" During the sermon they effect to be deeply moved, and bury their faces in their handkerchiefs. At the conclusion of the ceremony they crowd forward and manage to fill the c-riarries in waiting, to the exclusion of genuine mourners and friends of the family, anxious to attend the remains to the grave, there to pay their last tribute of respect to a mourned friend. Once on the way, they show their real object in attending the funeral to obtain a pleasant drive through the suburbs without any expense to themselves.

They chat and talk, gayly discuss Mrs. Grundy's last bonnet, casually mention the new pastor, and curdle the blood of their hearers by announcing, in a mellow dramatic whisper, that "the Browns have sold their piano," or that "the Smiths are eating in their kitchen."

Through all the journey they talk of everything or anything foreign to the mission that they are on. Once at the cemetery they again look solemn, and allow their chins to drop on their breast, and offer their cold, unfeeling and distasteful consolation to the grief-stricken family. And then the brisk drive back to the city is so pleasant, and it is so nice to be driven up to our own door with a flourish; it makes the neighbors talk. In many cases the funeral dead-beat has not even a casual acquaintance with the deceased or the bereaved family. Their mock solemnity and disagreeable forwardness serve only to disgust the intelligent people present, and only serve to place upon them the ban that will serve toward barring them from good society. Verily, the "funeral dead-beat" is a disagreeable character.



With eager eyes, the hunter bent forward, and read the penciling on the stray note-book leaf.

younger actors to come suddenly behind a comrade as he was ascending the stairs and give him a "boost."

One night, at the end of the first act of Macbeth, an actor by the name of Muzzy saw Macready ascending, and as his dress was very similar to the one worn by George Jones, the Macduff on this occasion, he could not resist the temptation to give the star a boost.

He did so in a most vigorous manner, and Macready turned around with a most astonished expression on his face.

"I beg your pardon," said Muzzy, assuming a contrite look. "I thought it was Jones."

Macready accepted the apology, merely gasping out:

"But—good God! does Jones like that sort of—ah—thing?"

Then he continued on his way up-stairs to his dressing-room.

Ganelon's Rescue.

A SEQUEL TO "THE HUNTER'S PERIL."

BY CAPT. CHARLES HOWARD.

"It's so curious that I can't account for it! *Le diable!* what has become of the boy? I know I struck his horse's trail back yonder, and by-and-by it looked as if wolves had followed the animal. Here the cut-up grass makes me more curious than ever. Where can the youngster be?"

The speaker was a powerfully-built man, whose morning hunt had been successful, as the presence of the antelope on his back attested. It was the fleet-footed creature of the Mexican table lands, and the pride of the hunter's calling. The man, whose features told that he was of French extraction, wore no cap; the slender shanks of the doe, crossed over his head, had taken the place of the article of cranial apparel; and he bore his burden with the greatest ease.

He stood beside one of the beautiful palmeto yuccas, the spiked trees of the far Southern plains, and looked everywhere for the person he had called "youngster" and "boy."

"Who killed the vulture?" he said, suddenly, turning and staring at the zopilote lying mangled on the grass. "Martel has been here, for I know his horse's tracks; but he isn't here now—that's certain!"

The French hunter was evidently puzzled, and encircled the tree with an expression of uneasiness on his bearded face. Meanwhile the dark forms of the Mexican vultures were hovering above, and he saw that his appearance had frightened the birds from the body of one of their own people.

All at once the giant hunter came to a halt,

ruined the little camp. Kettles had been broken, the frail huts torn down, and various articles of apparel dismembered. Not a thing had escaped the destroyers, and on the reverse of a map nailed to a tree were the words,

"*Guerra al cuchillo!*"—war to the knife!

"To the knife it shall be!" hissed Philip Ganelon, staring at the writing on the map.

"All this comes from the righteous shooting of a sneaking bloodhound. I knew Montejó would get his back up, and I cautioned the youngster. Now for business. I'm not going to rest my feet till I pay the old Mexican for the destruction of my camp, and get the boy out of his clutches. The girl is no better than her father. I know these half-Spanish women. They'll kill you while they kiss you."

After roasting a collop from the hind quarters of the antelope, the Frenchman left his fire, and walked down the bank of the Chihuahua river. His face wore a determined expression, and ever and anon the fire of indignation lit up his large dark eyes.

At last he left the stream and turned into a well-defined path fringed with *cacti* and the prickly pear. It was a path that told of much usage, and stretched through the *chaparral* like a serpent. The hunter followed it until the sun was nearing the meridian, when a scene of civilization suddenly burst upon his vision.

The *chaparral* had been traversed, and the many buildings that adorn the lands of a Mexican gentleman rewarded his long tramp.

"There it is!" he said, looking at the group of houses; "there lives the man who broke up our camp. I will go down and see him at once."

The Frenchman descended the knoll on which he stood, and boldly approached the Mexican mansion. As many trees stood between the foot of the acclivity and the house his presence was not perceived until he stepped upon the broad vine-shaded veranda or court.

Then a person perceiving him uttered a cry of affright, and darted into the mansion. Philip Ganelon followed.

As he crossed the threshold he heard a woman's shriek which served to quicken his movements. It was a cry of horror—piercing enough to chill the hunter's blood, and a moment after its fainter repetition he had burst a door open, and appeared in a room filled with people.

A dozen swarthy peons started from him with loud cries of terror, and others were forced right and left as the giant, like a resistless thunderbolt, sprang through the crowd to the open space in the center of the room.

What did he see?

The deathlike face of a beautiful senorita, who lay on the floor, a young white man bound in the chair of garrote, and the master

of "Now stand back, dogs, and let me pass!"

His command was obeyed, and with the lifeless victim of the garrote on his shoulder he passed from the house unmolested.

The slaves did not recover their right thoughts until Philip Ganelon was riding away on one of the senior's horses, with the youth—Martel Kensett—lying on the saddle.

He had the satisfaction of seeing the youth revive, and by-and-by heard his story.

"You know she saved me from her father's bloodhounds," he said to the Frenchman; "and, trusting her, I accompanied her home. She said the senior bore me no deep-seated ill-will; but she did not know the man. Shortly after I reached the *hacienda* Montejó returned from the destruction of our camp, and I fell into his hands. Lilita tried to save me; but his slaves obeyed his every bidding. I filled the chair; and, Philip, I feel that terrible choking yet!"

"No doubt," said the giant hunter, with a smile. "He, too, knows what it is."

"Do you think he is dead?" asked Kensett.

"He looked like a corpse when I picked you up," was the reply. "This country must not hold us now. The government will unleash the dogs of vengeance."

The youth did not reply, and the thoughtful expression on his still pale face deepened.

"You're thinking about the girl—I know it," said Ganelon, with a smile. "She's a Mexican—a half-Spanish Cleopatra, I mean. I wouldn't think of such a creature for the world."

The hunters eventually made their escape; and, strange to relate, two years later Martel Kensett encountered Lilita Montejó in the North. She was making a tour of the United States under the protection of her father, who had not perished in his own garrote.

In the Empire city the death of the bloodhound was forgotten; and Martel Kensett, with a beautiful bride, returned to the scene of Ganelon's rescue.

A Schoolmaster Loose.

BY M. QUAD.

FOUR or five days ago a man about forty years of age, looking as if he had been drawn over a dusty floor for an hour or two, called upon one of the members of the Board of Education and introduced himself as William Cannon Harrison, of Saginaw county. He was politely received, and he commenced business promptly by saying:

"I'm a-looking for a situation as a school teacher."